A VINDICATION OF NATURAL SOCIETY:

OR, A VIEW OF

THE MISERIES AND EVILS ARISING TO MANKIND

FROM EVERY SPECIES OF

ARTIFICIAL SOCIETY.

*IN A LETTER TO LORD ****,*

BY A LATE NOBLE WRITER.

1756.

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VOL. I.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE READER.

THE late Mr. Burke, from a principle of unaffected humility, which they, who were the most intimately acquainted with his character, best know to have been in his estimation one of the most important moral duties, never himself made any collection of the various publications with which, during a period of forty years, he adorned and enriched the literature of this country. When, however, the rapid and unexampled demand for his "Reflections on the Revolution of France" had unequivocally testified his celebrity as a writer, some of his friends so far prevailed upon him, that he permitted them to put forth a regular edition of his Works. Accordingly, three volumes in quarto appeared under that title in 1792, printed for the late Mr. Dodsley. That edition, there-

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fore, has been made the foundation of the present, for which a form has been chosen better adapted to publick convenience. Such errours of the press as have been discovered in it are here rectified: in other respects it is faithfully followed, except that, in one instance, an accident of little moment has occasioned a slight deviation from the strict chronological arrangement; and that on the other hand, a speech of conspicuous excellence, on his declining the poll at Bristol, in 1780, is here, for the first time, inserted in its proper place.

As the activity of the Author's mind, and the lively interest which he took in the welfare of his country, ceased only with his life, many subsequent productions issued from his pen, which were received in a manner corresponding with his distinguished reputation. He wrote also various tracts, of a less popular description, which he designed for

private

private circulation, in quarters where he supposed they might produce most benefit to the community; but which, with some other papers, have been printed, since his death, from copies which he left behind him fairly transcribed, and most of them corrected as for the press. All these, now first collected together, form the contents of the last two volumes. They are disposed in chronological order, with the exception of the Preface to Brissot's Address, which, having appeared in the Author's life time, and from delicacy not being avowed by him, did not come within the plan of this edition; but has been placed at the end of the last volume, on its being found deficient in just bulk.

The several posthumous publications, as they from time to time made their appearance, were accompanied by appropriate prefaces. These, however, as they were principally intended for temporary purposes, have been

omitted. Some few explanations only, which they contained, seem here to be necessary.

The "Observations on the Conduct of the Minority in the Session of 1793," had been written and sent by Mr. Burke as a paper entirely and strictly confidential; but it crept surreptitiously into the world, through the fraud and treachery of the man whom he had employed to transcribe it, and, as usually happens in such cases, came forth in a very mangled state, under a false title, and without the introductory letter. The friends of the Author, without waiting to consult him, instantly obtained an injunction from the Court of Chancery to stop the sale. What he himself felt, on receiving intelligence of the injury done him by one from whom his kindness deserved a very different return, will be best conveyed in his own words. The following is an extract of a letter to a friend, which he dictated on this subject from a sick bed.

"My

Bath, 15*th Feb.* 1797.

"MY DEAR LAURENCE,

"ON the appearance of the advertisement, all newspapers, and all letters
"have been kept back from me till this time.
"Mrs. Burke opened your's, and finding that
"all the measures in the power of Dr. King,
"yourself, and Mr. Woodford, had been
"taken to suppress the publication, she ventured to deliver me the letters to-day,
"which were read to me in my bed, about
"two o'clock.

"This affair does vex me; but I am not
"in a state of health at present to be deeply
"vexed at any thing. Whenever this matter
"comes into discussion, I authorize you to
"contradict the infamous reports, which (I
"am informed) have been given out; that
"this paper had been circulated through the
"Ministry, and was intended gradually to
"slide into the press. To the best of my
"recollection, I never had a clean copy of it
"but

"but one, which is now in my possession; "I never communicated that, but to the "Duke of Portland, from whom I had it "back again. But the Duke will set this "matter to rights, if in reality there were "two copies, and he has one. I never "shewed it, as they know, to any one of the "Ministry. If the Duke has really a copy, "I believe his and mine are the only ones "that exist, except what was taken by fraud "from loose and incorrect papers by S——, "to whom I gave the letter to copy. As "soon as I began to suspect him capable "of any such scandalous breach of trust, "you know with what anxiety I got the "loose papers out of his hands, not having "reason to think that he kept any other. "Neither do I believe in fact (unless he meditated this villainy long ago) that he did "or does now possess any clean copy. I "never communicated that paper to any one "out of the very small circle of those private "friends, from whom I concealed nothing.

"But

"But I beg you and my friends to be cau-
"tious how you let it be understood, that I
"disclaim any thing but the mere act and
"intention of publication. I do not retract
"any one of the sentiments contained in that
"Memorial, which was and is my justification,
"addressed to the friends, for whose use
"alone I intended it. Had I designed it for
"the publick, I should have been more
"exact and full. It was written in a tone of
"indignation, in consequence of the resolu-
"tions of the Whig Club, which were direct-
"ly pointed against myself and others, and
"occasioned our secession from that Club;
"which is the last act of my life that I shall
"under any circumstances repent. Many
"temperaments and explanations there
"would have been, if I ever had a notion
"that it should meet the publick eye."

In the mean time a large impression, amounting, it is believed, to three thousand copies, had been dispersed over the country.

To recall these was impossible; to have expected that any acknowledged production of Mr. Burke, full of matter likely to interest the future historian, could remain for ever in obscurity, would have been folly; and to have passed it over in silent neglect, on the one hand, or on the other, to have then made any considerable changes in it, might have seemed an abandonment of the principles which it contained. The Author, therefore, discovering that, with the exception of the introductory letter, he had not in fact kept any clean copy, as he had supposed, corrected one of the pamphlets with his own hand. From this, which was found preserved with his other papers, his friends afterwards thought it their duty to give an authentick edition.

The "Thoughts and Details on Scarcity" were originally presented in the form of a Memorial to Mr. Pitt. The Author proposed afterwards to recast the same matter in a

new

new shape. He even advertised the intended work under the title of "Letters on Rural Economicks, addressed to Mr. Arthur Young;" but he seems to have finished only two or three detached fragments of the first letter. These being too imperfect to be printed alone, his friends inserted them in the Memorial, where they seemed best to cohere. The Memorial had been fairly copied, but did not appear to have been examined or corrected, as some trifling errours of the transcriber were perceptible in it. The manuscript of the fragments was a rough draft from the Author's own hand, much blotted and very confused.

The "Third Letter on the Proposals for Peace," was in its progress through the press when Mr. Burke died. About one half of it was actually revised in print by himself,

himself, though not in the exact order of the pages as they now stand. He enlarged his first draft, and separated one great member of his subject, for the purpose of introducing some other matter between. The different parcels of manuscript, designed to intervene, were discovered. One of them he seemed to have gone over himself, and to have improved and augmented. The other (fortunately the smaller) was much more imperfect, just as it was taken from his mouth by dictation. The former reaches from the two hundred and forty-sixth* to near the end of the two hundred and sixty-second page; the latter nearly occupies the twelve pages which follow. No important change, none at all affecting the meaning of any passage, has been made in either: though in the more imperfect parcel, some latitude of discretion in subordinate points was necessarily used.

* In the present edition it extends from page 320 to page 336.

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There is, however, a considerable member, for the greater part of which, Mr. Burke's reputation is not responsible: this is the enquiry into the condition of the higher classes, which commences in the * two hundred and ninety-fifth page. The summary of the whole topick indeed, nearly as it stands in the three hundred and seventy-third and fourth pages†, was found, together with a marginal reference to the bankrupt list, in his own hand-writing; and the actual conclusion of the letter was dictated by him, but never received his subsequent correction. He had also preserved, as materials for this branch of his subject, some scattered hints, documents, and parts of a correspondence on the state of the country. He was, however, prevented from working on them, by the want of some authentick and official information, for which he had been long anx-

* Page 369 of the present edition.

† Pages 417, 418, of the present edition.

iously

iously waiting; in order to ascertain, to the satisfaction of the publick, what, with his usual sagacity, he had fully anticipated from his own personal observation, to his own private conviction. At length the reports of the different Committees, which had been appointed by the two Houses of Parliament, amply furnished him with evidence for this purpose. Accordingly he read and considered them with attention; but for any thing beyond this the season was now past. The Supreme Disposer of all, against whose inscrutable counsels it is vain as well as impious to murmur, did not permit him to enter on the execution of the task which he meditated. It was resolved, therefore, by one of his friends, after much hesitation, and under a very painful responsibility, to make such an attempt as he could at supplying the void; especially because the insufficiency of our resources for the continuanceof the war was understood to have been the prin-

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cipal objection urged against the two former "Letters on the Proposals for Peace." In performing with reverential diffidence this duty of friendship, care has been taken not to attribute to Mr. Burke any sentiment which is not most explicitly known, from repeated conversations, and from much correspondence, to have been decidedly entertained by that illustrious man. One passage of nearly three pages, containing a censure of our defensive system, is borrowed from a private letter, which he began to dictate, with an intention of comprising in it the short result of his opinions, but which he afterwards abandoned, when, a little time before his death, his health appeared in some degree to amend, and he hoped that Providence might have spared him to complete the larger publick letter, which he then proposed to resume.

In the preface to the former edition of

this letter, a fourth was mentioned as being in possession of Mr. Burke's friends. It was in fact announced by the Author himself, in the conclusion of the second, which it was then designed to follow. He intended, he said, "to proceed next on the ques-"tion of the facilities possessed by the "French Republick, *from the internal "state of other nations, and particularly of "this*, for obtaining her ends; and, as his "notions were controverted, to take notice "of what, in that way, had been recom-"mended to him." The vehicle which he had chosen for this part of his plan was an answer to a pamphlet which was supposed to come from high authority, and was circulated by Ministers with great industry, at the time of its appearance in October 1795, immediately previous to that Session of Parliament when His Majesty for the first time declared, that the appearance of any disposition in the enemy to negociate for

general

general peace, should not fail to be met with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect. In truth, the answer, which is full of spirit and vivacity, was written in the latter end of the same year; but was laid aside when the question assumed a more serious aspect, from the commencement of an actual negociation, which gave rise to the series of printed letters. Afterwards, he began to re-write it, with a view of accommodating it to his new purpose. The greater part, however, still remained in its original state; and several heroes of the Revolution, who are there celebrated, having in the interval passed off the publick stage, a greater liberty of insertion, and alteration, than his friends on consideration have thought allowable, would be necessary to adapt it to that place in the series for which it was ultimately designed by the Author. This piece, therefore, addressed, as the title originally stood, to his noble friend,

Earl Fitzwilliam, will be given the first in the supplemental volumes, which will be hereafter added to complete this edition of the Author's Works.

The tracts, most of them in manuscript, which have been already selected as fit for this purpose, will probably furnish four or five volumes more, to be printed uniformly with this edition. The principal piece is entitled "An Essay towards an abridgement of the English History;" and reaches from the earliest period down to the conclusion of the reign of King John. It is written with much depth of antiquarian research, directed by the mind of an intelligent statesman. This alone, as far as can be conjectured, will form more than one volume. Another entire volume will be filled with his letters to publick men on publick affairs, especially those of France. This supplement will be sent to the press without delay.

Mr. Burke's more familiar correspondence will be reserved, as authorities to accompany a narrative of his life, which will conclude the whole. The period during which he flourished was one of the most memorable of our annals. It comprehended the acquisition of one empire in the east, the loss of another in the west, and the total subversion of the ancient system of Europe by the French Revolution; with all which events the history of his life is necessarily and intimately connected; as indeed it also is, much more than is generally known, with the state of literature and the elegant arts. Such a subject of biography cannot be dismissed with a slight and rapid touch; nor can it be treated in a manner worthy of it, from the information, however authentick and extensive, which the industry of any one man may have accumulated. Many important communications have been received, but some materials, which relate

to the pursuits of his early years, and which are known to be in existence, have been hitherto kept back, notwithstanding repeated enquiries and applications. It is, therefore, once more earnestly requested, that all persons who call themselves the friends or admirers of the late Edmund Burke, will have the goodness to transmit, without delay, any notices of that, or of any other kind, which may happen to be in their possession, or within their reach, to Messrs. Rivington; a respect and kindness to his memory, which will be thankfully acknowledged by those friends, to whom, in dying, he committed the sacred trust of his reputation.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

EDITION OF 1815.

A NEW Edition of the Works of Mr. Burke having been called for by the Publick, the opportunity has been taken to make some slight changes, it is hoped for the better.

A different distribution of the contents, while it has made the volumes, with the exception of the first and sixth, more nearly equal in their respective bulk, has, at the same time, been fortunately found to produce a more methodical arrangement of the whole. The first and second volumes, as before, severally contain those literary and philosophical works by which Mr. Burke

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was known, previous to the commencement of his publick life as a statesman, and the political pieces which were written by him between the time of his first becoming connected with the Marquis of Rockingham, and his being chosen member for Bristol. In the third are comprehended all his speeches and pamphlets, from his first arrival at Bristol, as a candidate, in the year 1774, to his farewell address from the hustings of that city, in the year 1780. What he himself published relative to the affairs of India occupies the fourth volume. The remaining four comprise his works since the French Revolution, with the exception of the Letter to Lord Kenmare, on the Penal Laws against Irish Catholics; which was probably inserted where it stands, from its relation to the subject of the Letter addressed by him, at a later period, to Sir Hercules Langrishe. With the same exception, too, strict regard has been paid to chronological order,

order, which, in the last edition, was in some instances broken, to insert pieces that were not discovered till it was too late to introduce them in their proper places.

In the Appendix to the Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts, the references were found to be confused, and, in many places, erroneous. This probably had arisen from the circumstance that a larger and differently-constructed Appendix seems to have been originally designed by Mr. Burke, which, however, he afterwards abridged and altered, while the speech and the notes upon it remained as they were. The text and the documents that support it have throughout been accommodated to each other.

The orthography has been in many cases altered, and an attempt made to reduce it to some certain standard. The rule laid down for the discharge of this task was, that when-

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ever Mr. Burke could be perceived to have been uniform in his mode of spelling, that was considered as decisive; but, where he varied, (and as he was in the habit of writing by dictation, and leaving to others the superintendence of the press, he was peculiarly liable to variations of this sort), the best received authorities were directed to be followed. The reader, it is trusted, will find that this object, too much disregarded in modern books, has here been kept in view throughout. The quotations which are interspersed through the works of Mr. Burke, and which were frequently made by him from memory, have been generally compared with the original authors. Several mistakes in printing, of one word for another, by which the sense was either perverted or obscured, are now rectified. Two or three small insertions have also been made from a quarto copy corrected by Mr. Burke himself. From the same source something

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more has been drawn in the shape of notes, to which are subscribed his initials. Of this number is the explanation of that celebrated phrase, "the swinish multitude;" an explanation which was uniformly given by him to his friends, in conversation on the subject. But another note will probably interest the reader still more, as being strongly expressive of that parental affection which formed so amiable a feature in the character of Mr. Burke. It is in page 208 of Vol. V. where he points out a considerable passage as having been supplied by his "lost son." Several other parts, possibly amounting altogether to a page or thereabout, were indicated in the same manner; but, as they in general consist of single sentences, and as the meaning of the mark by which they were distinguished was not actually expressed, it has not been thought necessary to notice them particularly.

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OR, A VIEW OF

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IN A LETTER TO LORD ****,

BY A LATE NOBLE WRITER.

1756.

PREFACE.

BEFORE the philosophical works of Lord Bolingbroke had appeared, great things were expected from the leisure of a man, who, from the splendid scene of action in which his talents had enabled him to make so conspicuous a figure, had retired to employ those talents in the investigation of truth. Philosophy began to congratulate herself upon such a proselyte from the world of business, and hoped to have extended her power under the auspices of such a leader. In the midst of these pleasing expectations, the works themselves at last appeared in *full body,* and with great pomp. Those who searched in them for new discoveries in the mysteries of nature; those who expected something which might explain or direct the operations of the mind; those who hoped to see morality illustrated and enforced; those who looked for new helps to society and government; those who desired to see the characters and passions of mankind delineated; in short, all who consider such things as philosophy, and require some of them at least in every philosophical work, all these were certainly disappointed; they found the landmarks of science precisely in their former places:

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and they thought they received but a poor recompence for this disappointment, in seeing every mode of religion attacked in a lively manner, and the foundation of every virtue, and of all government, sapped with great art and much ingenuity. What advantage do we derive from such writings? What delight can a man find in employing a capacity which might be usefully exerted for the noblest purposes, in a sort of sullen labour, in which if the author could succeed, he is obliged to own, that nothing could be more fatal to mankind than his success?

I cannot conceive how this sort of writers propose to compass the designs they pretend to have in view, by the instruments which they employ. Do they pretend to exalt the mind of man, by proving him no better than a beast? Do they think tc enforce the practice of virtue, by denying that vice and virtue are distinguished by good or ill fortune here, or by happiness or misery hereafter? Do they imagine they shall increase our piety, and our reliance on God, by exploding his providence, and insisting that he is neither just nor good? Such are the doctrines which, sometimes concealed, sometimes openly and fully avowed, are found to prevail throughout the writings of Lord BOLINGBROKE; and such are the reasonings which this noble writer and several others have been pleased to dignify with the name of philosophy. If these

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are delivered in a specious manner, and in a style above the common, they cannot want a number of admirers of as much docility as can be wished for in disciples. To these the editor of the following little piece has addressed it: there is no reason to conceal the design of it any longer.

The design was, to shew that, without the exertion of any considerable forces, the same engines which were employed for the destruction of religion, might be employed with equal success for the subversion of government; and that specious arguments might be used against those things which they, who doubt of every thing else, will never permit to be questioned. It is an observation which I think Isocrates makes in one of his orations against the sophists, that it is far more easy to maintain a wrong cause, and to support paradoxical opinions to the satisfaction of a common auditory, than to establish a doubtful truth by solid and conclusive arguments. When men find that something can be said in favour of what, on the very proposal, they have thought utterly indefensible, they grow doubtful of their own reason; they are thrown into a sort of pleasing surprise; they run along with the speaker, charmed and captivated to find such a plentiful harvest of reasoning, where all seemed barren and unpromising. This is the fairy land of philosophy. And it very frequently happens, that those pleasing im-

pressions on the imagination, subsist and produce their effect, even after the understanding has been satisfied of their unsubstantial nature. There is a sort of gloss upon ingenious falsehoods, that dazzles the imagination, but which neither belongs to, nor becomes the sober aspect of truth. I have met with a quotation in Lord Coke's Reports that pleased me very much, though I do not know from whence he has taken it: "*Interdum fucata* "*falsitas,* (says he) *in multis est probabilior, et* "*sæpe rationibus vincit nudam veritatem.*" In such cases, the writer has a certain fire and alacrity inspired into him by a consciousness, that, let it fare how it will with the subject, his ingenuity will be sure of applause; and this alacrity becomes much greater if he acts upon the offensive, by the impetuosity that always accompanies an attack, and the unfortunate propensity which mankind have to the finding and exaggerating faults. The editor is satisfied that a mind which has no restraint from a sense of its own weakness, of its subordinate rank in the creation, and of the extreme danger of letting the imagination loose upon some subjects, may very plausibly attack every thing the most excellent and venerable; that it would not be difficult to criticise the creation itself; and that if we were to examine the divine fabricks by our ideas of reason and fitness, and to use the same method of attack by which some men have assaulted revealed religion,

religion, we might with as good colour, and with the same success, make the wisdom and power of God in his creation appear to many no better than foolishness. There is an air of plausibility which accompanies vulgar reasonings and notions, taken from the beaten circle of ordinary experience, that is admirably suited to the narrow capacities of some, and to the laziness of others. But this advantage is in a great measure lost, when a painful, comprehensive survey of a very complicated matter, and which requires a great variety of considerations, is to be made; when we must seek in a profound subject, not only for arguments, but for new materials of argument, their measures and their method of arrangement; when we must go out of the sphere of our ordinary ideas, and when we can never walk surely, but by being sensible of our blindness. And this we must do, or we do nothing, whenever we examine the result of a reason which is not our own. Even in matters which are, as it were, just within our reach, what would become of the world, if the practice of all moral duties, and the foundations of society, rested upon having their reasons made clear and demonstrative to every individual?

The editor knows that the subject of this letter is not so fully handled as obviously it might; it was not his design to say all that could possibly be said. It had been inexcusable to fill a large

volume with the abuse of reason; nor would such an abuse have been tolerable, even for a few pages, if some under-plot, of more consequence than the apparent design, had not been carried on.

Some persons have thought that the advantages of the state of nature ought to have been more fully displayed. This had undoubtedly been a very ample subject for declamation; but they do not consider the character of the piece. The writers against religion, whilst they oppose every system, are wisely careful never to set up any of their own. If some inaccuracies in calculation, in reasoning, or in method, be found, perhaps these will not be looked upon as faults by the admirers of Lord BOLINGBROKE; who will, the editor is afraid, observe much more of his Lordship's character in such particulars of the following letter, than they are likely to find of that rapid torrent of an impetuous and overbearing eloquence, and the variety of rich imagery for which that writer is justly admired.

A

LETTER

TO

LORD * * * *.

SHALL I venture to say, my Lord, that in our late conversation, you were inclined to the party which you adopted rather by the feelings of your good nature, than by the conviction of your judgment? We laid open the foundations of society; and you feared, that the curiosity of this search might endanger the ruin of the whole fabrick. You would readily have allowed my principle, but you dreaded the consequences; you thought, that having once entered upon these reasonings, we might be carried insensibly and irresistibly farther than at first we could either have imagined or wished. But for my part, my Lord, I then thought, and am still of the same opinion, that errour, and not truth of any kind, is dangerous; that ill conclusions can only flow from false propositions; and that, to know whether any proposition be true or false, it is a preposterous method to examine it by its apparent consequences.

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These were the reasons which induced me to go so far into that enquiry; and they are the reasons which direct me in all my enquiries. I had indeed often reflected on that subject before I could prevail on myself to communicate my reflexions to any body. They were generally melancholy enough; as those usually are which carry us beyond the mere surface of things; and which would undoubtedly make the lives of all thinking men extremely miserable, if the same philosophy which caused the grief, did not at the same time administer the comfort.

On considering political societies, their origin, their constitution, and their effects, I have sometimes been in a good deal more than doubt, whether the Creator did ever really intend man for a state of happiness. He has mixed in his cup a number of natural evils, (in spite of the boasts of stoicism they are evils) and every endeavour which the art and policy of mankind has used from the beginning of the world to this day, in order to alleviate, or cure them, has only served to introduce new mischiefs, or to aggravate and inflame the old. Besides this, the mind of man itself is too active and restless a principle ever to settle on the true point of quiet. It discovers every day some craving want in a body, which really wants but little. It every day invents some new artificial rule to guide that nature which, if left to itself,

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were the best and surest guide. It finds out imaginary beings prescribing imaginary laws; and then, it raises imaginary terrours to support a belief in the beings, and an obedience to the laws.—Many things have been said, and very well undoubtedly, on the subjection in which we should preserve our bodies to the government of our understanding; but enough has not been said upon the restraint which our bodily necessities ought to lay on the extravagant sublimities and eccentrick rovings of our minds. The body, or, as some love to call it, our inferiour nature, is wiser in its own plain way, and attends its own business more directly than the mind with all its boasted subtilty.

In the state of nature, without question, mankind was subjected to many and great inconveniences. Want of union, want of mutual assistance, want of a common arbitrator to resort to in their differences. These were evils which they could not but have felt pretty severely on many occasions. The original children of the earth lived with their brethren of the other kinds in much equality. Their diet must have been confined almost wholly to the vegetable kind; and the same tree, which in its flourishing state produced them berries, in its decay gave them an habitation. The mutual desires of the sexes uniting their bodies and affections, and the children which are the results of these intercourses, introduced

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first the notion of society, and taught its conveniences. This society, founded in natural appetites and instincts, and not in any positive institution, I shall call *natural society*. Thus far nature went and succeeded: but man would go farther. The great errour of our nature is, not to know where to stop, not to be satisfied with any reasonable acquirement; not to compound with our condition; but to lose all we have gained by an insatiable pursuit after more. Man found a considerable advantage by this union of many persons to form one family; he therefore judged that he would find his account proportionably in an union of many families into one body politick. And as nature has formed no bond of union to hold them together, he supplied this defect by *laws*.

This is *political society*. And hence the sources of what are usually called states, civil societies, or governments; into some form of which, more extended or restrained, all mankind have gradually fallen. And since it has so happened, and that we owe an implicit reverence to all the institutions of our ancestors, we shall consider these institutions with all that modesty with which we ought to conduct ourselves in examining a received opinion; but with all that freedom and candour which we owe to truth wherever we find it, or however it may contradict our own notions, or oppose our own interests. There is a most absurd

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and audacious method of reasoning avowed by some bigots and enthusiasts, and through fear assented to by some wiser and better men; it is this: They argue against a fair discussion of popular prejudices, because, say they, though they would be found without any reasonable support, yet the discovery might be productive of the most dangerous consequences. Absurd and blasphemous notion! as if all happiness was not connected with the practice of virtue, which necessarily depends upon the knowledge of truth; that is, upon the knowledge of those unalterable relations which Providence has ordained that every thing should bear to every other. These relations, which are truth itself, the foundation of virtue, and, consequently, the only measures of happiness, should be likewise the only measures by which we should direct our reasoning. To these we should conform in good earnest; and not think to force nature, and the whole order of her system, by a compliance with our pride and folly, to conform to our artificial regulations. It is by a conformity to this method we owe the discovery of the few truths we know, and the little liberty and rational happiness we enjoy. We have something fairer play than a reasoner could have expected formerly; and we derive advantages from it which are very visible.

The fabrick of superstition has in this our age and

and nation received much ruder shocks than it had ever felt before; and, through the chinks and breaches of our prison, we see such glimmerings of light, and feel such refreshing airs of liberty, as daily raise our ardour for more. The miseries derived to mankind from superstition under the name of religion, and of ecclesiastical tyranny under the name of church government, have been clearly and usefully exposed. We begin to think and to act from reason and from nature alone. This is true of several, but by far the majority is still in the same old state of blindness and slavery; and much is it to be feared that we shall perpetually relapse, whilst the real productive cause of all this superstitious folly, enthusiastical nonsense, and holy tyranny, holds a reverend place in the estimation even of those who are otherwise enlightened.

Civil government borrows a strength from ecclesiastical; and artificial laws receive a sanction from artificial revelations. The ideas of religion and government are closely connected; and whilst we receive government as a thing necessary, or even useful to our well-being, we shall in spite of us draw in, as a necessary, though undesirable consequence, an artificial religion of some kind or other. To this the vulgar will always be voluntary slaves; and even those of a rank of understanding superiour, will now and then involuntarily

feel its influence. It is therefore of the deepest concernment to us to be set right in this point; and to be well satisfied whether civil government be such a protector from natural evils, and such a nurse and increaser of blessings, as those of warm imaginations promise. In such a discussion, far am I from proposing in the least to reflect on our most wise form of government; no more than I would, in the freer parts of my philosophical writings, mean to object to the piety, truth, and perfection of our most excellent church. Both I am sensible have their foundations on a rock. No discovery of truth can prejudice them. On the contrary, the more closely the origin of religion and government is examined, the more clearly their excellencies must appear. They come purified from the fire. My business is not with them. Having entered a protest against all objections from these quarters, I may the more freely enquire, from history and experience, how far policy has contributed in all times to alleviate those evils which Providence, that perhaps has designed us for a state of imperfection, has imposed; how far our physical skill has cured our constitutional disorders; and whether it may not have introduced new ones, curable perhaps by no skill.

In looking over any state to form a judgment on it, it presents itself in two lights; the external, and the internal. The first, that relation which

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it bears in point of friendship or enmity to other states. The second, that relation which its component parts, the governing and the governed, bear to each other. The first part of the external view of all states, their relation as friends, makes so trifling a figure in history, that I am very sorry to say, it affords me but little matter on which to expatiate. The good offices done by one nation to its neighbour*; the support given in publick distress; the relief afforded in general calamity; the protection granted in emergent danger; the mutual return of kindness and civility, would afford a very ample and very pleasing subject for history. But, alas! all the history of all times, concerning all nations, does not afford matter enough to fill ten pages, though it should be spun out by the wire-drawing amplification of a Guicciardini himself. The glaring side is that of enmity. War is the matter which fills all history, and consequently the only or almost the only view in which we can see the external of political society is in a hostile shape; and the only actions to which we have always seen, and still see, all of them intent, are such as tend to the destruction of

* Had his Lordship lived to our days, to have seen the noble relief given by this nation to the distressed Portuguese, he had perhaps owned this part of his argument a little weakened; but we do not think ourselves entitled to alter his Lordship's words, but that we are bound to follow him exactly.

of one another. "War," says Machiavel, "ought "to be the only study of a prince;" and by a prince, he means every sort of state, however constituted. "He ought," says this great political Doctor, "to "consider peace only as a breathing-time, which "gives him leisure to contrive, and furnishes "ability to execute military plans." A meditation on the conduct of political societies made old Hobbes imagine, that war was the state of nature; and truly, if a man judged of the individuals of our race by their conduct when united and packed into nations and kingdoms, he might imagine that every sort of virtue was unnatural and foreign to the mind of man.

The first accounts we have of mankind are but so many accounts of their butcheries. All empires have been cemented in blood; and, in those early periods when the race of mankind began first to form themselves into parties and combinations, the first effect of the combination, and indeed the end for which it seems purposely formed, and best calculated, was their mutual destruction. All ancient history is dark and uncertain. One thing however is clear,—there were conquerors, and conquests in those days; and, consequently, all that devastation by which they are formed, and all that oppression by which they are maintained. We know little of Sesostris, but that he led out of Egypt an army of above 700,000 men; that he

overran the Mediterranean coast as far as Colchis; that, in some places he met but little resistance, and of course shed not a great deal of blood; but that he found, in others, a people who knew the value of their liberties, and sold them dear. Whoever considers the army this conqueror headed, the space he traversed, and the opposition he frequently met, with the natural accidents of sickness, and the dearth and badness of provision to which he must have been subject in the variety of climates and countries his march lay through, if he knows any thing, he must know that even the conqueror's army must have suffered greatly; and that, of this immense number, but a very small part could have returned to enjoy the plunder accumulated by the loss of so many of their companions, and the devastation of so considerable a part of the world. Considering, I say, the vast army headed by this conqueror, whose unwieldy weight was almost alone sufficient to wear down its strength, it will be far from excess to suppose that one half was lost in the expedition. If this was the state of the victorious, and, from the circumstances, it must have been this at the least; the vanquished must have had a much heavier loss, as the greatest slaughter is always in the flight, and great carnage did in those times and countries ever attend the first rage of conquest. It will therefore be very reasonable to allow on their account as much

much as, added to the losses of the conqueror, may amount to a million of deaths, and then we shall see this conqueror, the oldest we have on the records of history, (though, as we have observed before, the chronology of these remote times is extremely uncertain), opening the scene by a destruction of at least one million of his species, unprovoked but by his ambition, without any motives but pride, cruelty, and madness, and without any benefit to himself; (for Justin expressly tells us he did not maintain his conquests) but solely to make so many people, in so distant countries, feel experimentally, how severe a scourge Providence intends for the human race, when he gives one man the power over many, and arms his naturally impotent, and feeble rage, with the hands of millions, who know no common principle of action, but a blind obedience to the passions of their ruler.

The next personage who figures in the tragedies of this ancient theatre is Semiramis: for we have no particulars of Ninus, but that he made immense and rapid conquests, which doubtless were not compassed without the usual carnage. We see an army of about three millions employed by this martial queen in a war against the Indians. We see the Indians arming a yet greater; and we behold a war continued with much fury, and with various success. This ends in the retreat of the queen, with scarce a third of the troops employed

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in the expedition; an expedition which, at this rate, must have cost two millions of souls on her part; and it is not unreasonable to judge that the country which was the seat of war must have been an equal sufferer. But I am content to detract from this, and to suppose that the Indians lost only half so much, and then the account stands thus: In this war alone, (for Semiramis had other wars) in this single reign, and in this one spot of the globe, did three millions of souls expire, with all the horrid and shocking circumstances which attend all wars, and in a quarrel, in which none of the sufferers could have the least rational concern.

The Babylonian, Assyrian, Median, and Persian monarchies must have poured out seas of blood in their formation, and in their destruction. The armies and fleets of Xerxes, their numbers, the glorious stand made against them, and the unfortunate event of all his mighty preparations, are known to every body. In this expedition, draining half Asia of its inhabitants, he led an army of about two millions to be slaughtered, and wasted by a thousand fatal accidents, in the same place where his predecessors had before by a similar madness consumed the flower of so many kingdoms, and wasted the force of so extensive an empire. It is a cheap calculation to say, that the Persian empire, in its wars against the Greeks, and Scythians, threw away at least four millions of its subjects; to

say

say nothing of its other wars, and the losses sustained in them. These were their losses abroad; but the war was brought home to them, first by Agesilaus, and afterwards by Alexander. I have not, in this retreat, the books necessary to make very exact calculations; nor is it necessary to give more than hints to one of your Lordship's erudition. You will recollect his uninterrupted series of success. You will run over his battles. You will call to mind the carnage which was made. You will give a glance at the whole, and you will agree with me, that to form this hero no less than twelve hundred thousand lives must have been sacrificed; but no sooner had he fallen himself a sacrifice to his vices, than a thousand breaches were made for ruin to enter, and give the last hand to this scene of misery and destruction. His kingdom was rent and divided; which served to employ the more distinct parts to tear each other to pieces, and bury the whole in blood and slaughter. The kings of Syria and of Egypt, the kings of Pergamus and Macedon, without intermission worried each other for above two hundred years; until at last a strong power, arising in the west, rushed in upon them and silenced their tumults, by involving all the contending parties in the same destruction. It is little to say, that the contentions between the successors of Alexander depopulated that part of the world of at least two millions.

The struggle between the Macedonians and Greeks, and, before that, the disputes of the Greek commonwealths among themselves, for an unprofitable superiority, form one of the bloodiest scenes in history. One is astonished how such a small spot could furnish men sufficient to sacrifice to the pitiful ambition of possessing five or six thousand more acres, or two or three more villages: yet to see the acrimony and bitterness with which this was disputed between the Athenians and Lacedemonians; what armies cut off; what fleets sunk, and burnt; what a number of cities sacked, and their inhabitants slaughtered, and captived; one would be induced to believe the decision of the fate of mankind, at least, depended upon it! But these disputes ended as all such ever have done, and ever will do; in a real weakness of all parties; a momentary shadow, and dream of power in some one; and the subjection of all to the yoke of a stranger, who knows how to profit of their divisions. This at least was the case of the Greeks; and surely, from the earliest accounts of them, to their absorption into the Roman empire, we cannot judge that their intestine divisions, and their foreign wars, consumed less than three millions of their inhabitants.

What an Aceldama, what a field of blood Sicily has been in ancient times, whilst the mode of its government was controverted between the republican

lican and tyrannical parties, and the possession struggled for by the natives, the Greeks, the Carthaginians, and the Romans, your Lordship will easily recollect. You will remember the total destruction of such bodies as an army of 300,000 men. You will find every page of its history dyed in blood, and blotted and confounded by tumults, rebellions, massacres, assassinations, proscriptions, and a series of horrour beyond the histories perhaps of any other nation in the world: though the histories of all nations are made up of similar matter. I once more excuse myself in point of exactness for want of books. But I shall estimate the slaughters in this island but at two millions; which your Lordship will find much short of the reality.

Let us pass by the wars, and the consequences of them, which wasted Grecia-Magna, before the Roman power prevailed in that part of Italy. They are perhaps exaggerated; therefore I shall only rate them at one million. Let us hasten to open that great scene which establishes the Roman empire, and forms the grand catastrophe of the ancient drama. This empire, whilst in its infancy, began by an effusion of human blood scarcely credible. The neighbouring little states teemed for new destruction: the Sabines, the Samnites, the Æqui, the Volci, the Hetrurians, were broken by a series of slaughters which had no interruption, for some hundreds of years; slaughters which upon

all sides consumed more than two millions of the wretched people. The Gauls, rushing into Italy about this time, added the total destruction of their own armies to those of the ancient inhabitants. In short, it were hardly possible to conceive a more horrid and bloody picture, if that the Punick wars that ensued soon after did not present one, that far exceeds it. Here we find that climax of devastation, and ruin, which seemed to shake the whole earth. The extent of this war which vexed so many nations, and both elements, and the havock of the human species caused in both, really astonishes beyond expression, when it is nakedly considered, and those matters which are apt to divert our attention from it, the characters, actions, and designs of the persons concerned, are not taken into the account. These wars, I mean those called the Punick wars, could not have stood the human race in less than three millions of the species. And yet this forms but a part only, and a very small part, of the havock caused by the Roman ambition. The war with Mithridates was very little less bloody; that prince cut off at one stroke 150,000 Romans by a massacre. In that war Sylla destroyed 300,000 men at Cheronea. He defeated Mithridates' army under Dorilaus, and slew 300,000. This great and unfortunate prince lost another 300,000 before Cyzicum. In the course of the war he had innumerable other losses; and

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having many intervals of success, he revenged them severely. He was at last totally overthrown; and he crushed to pieces the king of Armenia his ally by the greatness of his ruin. All who had connexions with him shared the same fate. The merciless genius of Sylla had its full scope; and the streets of Athens were not the only ones which ran with blood. At this period, the sword, glutted with foreign slaughter, turned its edge upon the bowels of the Roman republick itself; and presented a scene of cruelties and treasons enough almost to obliterate the memory of all the external devastations. I intended, my Lord, to have proceeded in a sort of method in estimating the numbers of mankind cut off in these wars which we have on record. But I am obliged to alter my design. Such a tragical uniformity of havock and murder would disgust your Lordship as much as it would me; and I confess I already feel my eyes ake by keeping them so long intent on so bloody a prospect. I shall observe little on the Servile, the Social, the Gallick, and Spanish wars; nor upon those with Jugurtha, nor Antiochus, nor many others equally important, and carried on with equal fury. The butcheries of Julius Cæsar alone are calculated by somebody else; the numbers he has been the means of destroying have been reckoned at 1,200,000. But to give your Lordship an idea that may serve as a standard,

by which to measure, in some degree, the others; you will turn your eyes on Judea; a very inconsiderable spot of the earth in itself, though ennobled by the singular events which had their rise in that country.

This spot happened, it matters not here by what means, to become at several times extremely populous, and to supply men for slaughters scarcely credible, if other well-known and well-attested ones had not given them a colour. The first settling of the Jews here was attended by an almost entire extirpation of all the former inhabitants. Their own civil wars, and those with their petty neighbours, consumed vast multitudes almost every year for several centuries; and the irruptions of the kings of Babylon and Assyria made immense ravages. Yet we have their history but partially, in an indistinct confused manner; so that I shall only throw the strong point of light upon that part which coincides with Roman history, and of that part only on the point of time when they received the great and final stroke which made them no more a nation; a stroke which is allowed to have cut off little less than two millions of that people. I say nothing of the loppings made from that stock whilst it stood; nor from the suckers that grew out of the old root ever since. But if, in this inconsiderable part of the globe, such a carnage has been made in two or three short reigns, and

and that this great carnage, great as it is, makes but a minute part of what the histories of that people inform us they suffered; what shall we judge of countries more extended, and which have waged wars by far more considerable?

Instances of this sort compose the uniform of history. But there have been periods when no less than universal destruction to the race of mankind seems to have been threatened. Such was that, when the Goths, the Vandals, and the Huns, poured into Gaul, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Africa, carrying destruction before them as they advanced, and leaving horrid desarts every way behind them. *Vastum ubique silentium, secreti colles; fumantia procul tecta; nemo exploratoribus obvius,* is what Tacitus calls *facies victoriæ.* It is always so; but was here emphatically so. From the north proceeded the swarms of Goths, Vandals, Huns, Ostrogoths, who ran towards the south, into Africa itself, which suffered as all to the north had done. About this time, another torrent of barbarians, animated by the same fury, and encouraged by the same success, poured out of the south, and ravaged all to the north-east and west, to the remotest parts of Persia on one hand, and to the banks of the Loire or further on the other; destroying all the proud and curious monuments of human art, that not even the memory might seem to survive of the former inhabitants. What has been done since,

and

and what will continue to be done while the same inducements to war continue, I shall not dwell upon. I shall only in one word mention the horrid effects of bigotry and avarice, in the conquest of Spanish America; a conquest, on a low estimation, effected by the murder of ten millions of the species. I shall draw to a conclusion of this part, by making a general calculation of the whole. I think I have actually mentioned above thirty-six millions. I have not particularized any more. I don't pretend to exactness; therefore, for the sake of a general view, I shall lay together all those actually slain in battles, or who have perished in a no less miserable manner by the other destructive consequences of war from the beginning of the world to this day, in the four parts of it, at a thousand times as much; no exaggerated calculation, allowing for time and extent. We have not perhaps spoke of the five-hundredth part; I am sure I have not of what is actually ascertained in history; but how much of these butcheries are only expressed in generals, what part of time history has never reached, and what vast spaces of the habitable globe it has not embraced, I need not mention to your Lordship. I need not enlarge on those torrents of silent and inglorious blood which have glutted the thirsty sands of Africk, or discoloured the polar snow, or fed the savage forests of America for so many ages of con-

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tinual war. Shall I, to justify my calculations from the charge of extravagance, add to the account those skirmishes which happen in all wars, without being singly of sufficient dignity in mischief, to merit a place in history, but which by their frequency compensate for this comparative innocence; shall I inflame the account by those general massacres which have devoured whole cities and nations; those wasting pestilences, those consuming famines, and all those furies that follow in the train of war? I have no need to exaggerate; and I have purposely avoided a parade of eloquence on this occasion. I should despise it upon any occasion; else in mentioning these slaughters, it is obvious how much the whole might be heightened, by an affecting description of the horrours that attend the wasting of kingdoms, and sacking of cities. But I do not write to the vulgar, nor to that which only governs the vulgar, their passions. I go upon a naked and moderate calculation, just enough, without a pedantical exactness, to give your Lordship some feeling of the effects of political society. I charge the whole of these effects on political society. I avow the charge, and I shall presently make it good to your Lordship's satisfaction. The numbers I particularized are about thirty-six millions. Besides those killed in battles I have said something, not half what the matter would have justified, but something I have said

said concerning the consequences of war even more dreadful than that monstrous carnage itself which shocks our humanity, and almost staggers our belief. So that allowing me in my exuberance one way for my deficiencies in the other, you will find me not unreasonable. I think the numbers of men now upon earth are computed at five hundred millions at the most. Here the slaughter of mankind, on what you will call a small calculation, amounts to upwards of seventy times the number of souls this day on the globe: a point which may furnish matter of reflection to one less inclined to draw consequences than your Lordship.

I now come to shew, that political society is justly chargeable with much the greatest part of this destruction of the species. To give the fairest play to every side of the question, I will own that there is a haughtiness, and fierceness in human nature, which will cause innumerable broils, place men in what situation you please; but owning this, I still insist in charging it to political regulations, that these broils are so frequent, so cruel, and attended with consequences so deplorable. In a state of nature, it had been impossible to find a number of men, sufficient for such slaughters, agreed in the same bloody purpose; or allowing that they might have come to such an agreement, (an impossible supposition) yet the means that simple

simple nature has supplied them with, are by no means adequate to such an end; many scratches, many bruises undoubtedly would be received upon all hands; but only a few, a very few deaths. Society, and politicks, which have given us these destructive views, have given us also the means of satisfying them. From the earliest dawnings of policy to this day, the invention of men has been sharpening and improving the mystery of murder, from the first rude essays of clubs and stones, to the present perfection of gunnery, cannoneering, bombarding, mining, and all those species of artificial, learned, and refined cruelty, in which we are now so expert, and which make a principal part of what politicians have taught us to believe is our principal glory.

How far mere nature would have carried us, we may judge by the example of those animals, who still follow her laws, and even of those to whom she has given dispositions more fierce, and arms more terrible than ever she intended we should use. It is an incontestable truth, that there is more havock made in one year by men of men, than has been made by all the lions, tygers, panthers, ounces, leopards, hyenas, rhinoceroses, elephants, bears, and wolves, upon their several species, since the beginning of the world; though these agree ill enough with each other, and have a much greater proportion of rage and fury in

their composition than we have. But with respect to you, ye legislators, ye civilisers of mankind! ye Orpheuses, Moseses, Minoses, Solons, Theseuses, Lycurguses, Numas! with respect to you be it spoken, your regulations have done more mischief in cold blood, than all the rage of the fiercest animals in their greatest terrours, or furies, has ever done, or ever could do!

These evils are not accidental. Whoever will take the pains to consider the nature of society will find that they result directly from its constitution. For as *subordination,* or, in other words, the reciprocation of tyranny, and slavery, is requisite to support these societies; the interest, the ambition, the malice, or the revenge, nay even the whim and caprice of one ruling man among them is enough to arm all the rest, without any private views of their own, to the worst and blackest purposes: and what is at once lamentable, and ridiculous, these wretches engage under those banners with a fury greater than if they were animated by revenge for their own proper wrongs.

It is no less worth observing, that this artificial division of mankind, into separate societies, is a perpetual source in itself of hatred and dissension among them. The names which distinguish them are enough to blow up hatred and rage. Examine history; consult present experience; and you will find that far the greater part of the

quarrels

quarrels between several nations, had scarce any other occasion, than, that these nations were different combinations of people, and called by different names: to an Englishman, the name of a Frenchman, a Spaniard, an Italian, much more a Turk, or a Tartar, raises of course ideas of hatred, and contempt. If you would inspire this compatriot of ours with pity, or regard, for one of these, would you not hide that distinction? You would not pray him to compassionate the poor Frenchman, or the unhappy German. Far from it; you would speak of him as a *foreigner;* an accident to which all are liable. You would represent him as a *man;* one partaking with us of the same common nature, and subject to the same law. There is something so averse from our nature in these artificial political distinctions, that we need no other trumpet to kindle us to war, and destruction. But there is something so benign and healing in the general voice of humanity, that, maugre all our regulations to prevent it, the simple name of man applied properly, never fails to work a salutary effect.

This natural unpremeditated effect of policy on the unpossessed passions of mankind appears on other occasions. The very name of a politician, a statesman, is sure to cause terrour and hatred; it has always connected with it the ideas of treachery, cruelty, fraud and tyranny; and those writers, who

have faithfully unveiled the mysteries of state-freemasonry, have ever been held in general detestation, for even knowing so perfectly a theory so detestable. The case of Machiavel seems at first sight something hard in that respect. He is obliged to bear the iniquities of those whose maxims and rules of government he published. His speculation is more abhorred than their practice.

But if there were no other arguments against artificial society than this I am going to mention, methinks it ought to fall by this one only. All writers on the science of policy are agreed, and they agree with experience, that all governments must frequently infringe the rules of justice to support themselves; that truth must give way to dissimulation; honesty to convenience; and humanity itself to the reigning interest. The whole of this mystery of iniquity is called the reason of state. It is a reason which I own I cannot penetrate. What sort of a protection is this of the general right, that is maintained by infringing the rights of particulars? What sort of justice is this, which is inforced by breaches of its own laws? These paradoxes I leave to be solved by the able heads of legislators and politicians. For my part, I say what a plain man would say on such an occasion. I can never believe, that any institution agreeable to nature, and proper for mankind, could find it necessary, or even expedient, in any case

whatsoever,

whatsoever, to do, what the best and worthiest instincts of mankind warn us to avoid. But no wonder, that what is set up in opposition to the state of nature should preserve itself by trampling upon the law of nature.

To prove that these sorts of policed societies are a violation offered to nature, and a constraint upon the human mind, it needs only to look upon the sanguinary measures, and instruments of violence, which are every where used to support them. Let us take a review of the dungeons, whips, chains, racks, gibbets, with which every society is abundantly stored; by which hundreds of victims are annually offered up to support a dozen or two in pride and madness, and millions in an abject servitude and dependence. There was a time, when I looked with a reverential awe on these mysteries of policy; but age, experience, and philosophy, have rent the veil; and I view this *sanctum sanctorum*, at least, without any enthusiastick admiration. I acknowledge, indeed, the necessity of such a proceeding in such institutions; but I must have a very mean opinion of institutions where such proceedings are necessary.

It is a misfortune, that in no part of the globe, natural liberty and natural religion are to be found pure, and free from the mixture of political adulterations. Yet we have implanted in us by Providence, ideas, axioms, rules, of what is pious, just,

fair, honest, which no political craft, nor learned sophistry, can entirely expel from our breasts. By these we judge, and we cannot otherwise judge, of the several artificial modes of religion and society, and determine of them as they approach to, or recede from this standard.

The simplest form of government is *despotism*, where all the inferiour orbs of power are moved merely by the will of the Supreme, and all that are subjected to them directed in the same manner, merely by the occasional will of the magistrate. This form, as it is the most simple, so it is infinitely the most general. Scarcely any part of the world is exempted from its power. And in those few places where men enjoy what they call liberty, it is continually in a tottering situation, and makes greater and greater strides to that gulf of despotism which at last swallows up every species of government. The manner of ruling being directed merely by the will of the weakest, and generally the worst, man in the society, becomes the most foolish and capricious thing, at the same time that it is the most terrible and destructive, that well can be conceived. In a despotism the principal person finds, that, let the want, misery, and indigence of his subjects be what they will, he can yet possess abundantly of every thing to gratify his most insatiable wishes. He does more. He finds that these gratifications increase in

proportion to the wretchedness and slavery of his subjects. Thus encouraged both by passion and interest to trample on the publick welfare, and by his station placed above both shame and fear, he proceeds to the most horrid and shocking outrages upon mankind. Their persons become victims of his suspicions. The slightest displeasure is death; and a disagreeable aspect is often as great a crime as high treason. In the court of Nero, a person of learning, of unquestioned merit, and of unsuspected loyalty, was put to death for no other reason, than that he had a pedantick countenance which displeased the emperour. This very monster of mankind appeared in the beginning of his reign to be a person of virtue. Many of the greatest tyrants on the records of history have begun their reigns in the fairest manner. But the truth is, this unnatural power corrupts both the heart and the understanding. And to prevent the least hope of amendment, a king is ever surrounded by a croud of infamous flatterers, who find their account in keeping him from the least light of reason, till all ideas of rectitude and justice are utterly erased from his mind. When Alexander had in his fury inhumanly butchered one of his best friends and bravest captains; on the return of reason he began to conceive an horrour suitable to the guilt of such a murder. In this juncture, his council came to his assistance.

But what did his council? They found him out a philosopher who gave him comfort. And in what manner did this philosopher comfort him for the loss of such a man, and heal his conscience, flagrant with the smart of such a crime? You have the matter at length in Plutarch. He told him; "*that let a sovereign do what he will, all his ac-*" *tions are just and lawful, because they are his.*" The palaces of all princes abound with such courtly philosophers. The consequence was such as might be expected. He grew every day a monster more abandoned to unnatural lust, to debauchery, to drunkenness, and to murder. And yet this was originally a great man, of uncommon capacity, and a strong propensity to virtue. But unbounded power proceeds step by step, until it has eradicated every laudable principle. It has been remarked, that there is no prince so bad, whose favourites and ministers are not worse. There is hardly any prince without a favourite, by whom he is governed in as arbitrary a manner as he governs the wretches subjected to him. Here the tyranny is doubled. There are two courts, and two interests; both very different from the interests of the people. The favourite knows that the regard of a tyrant is as unconstant and capricious as that of a woman; and concluding his time to be short, he makes haste to fill up the measure of his iniquity, in rapine, in luxury, and

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in revenge. Every avenue to the throne is shut up. He oppresses and ruins the people, whilst he persuades the prince, that those murmurs raised by his own oppression are the effects of disaffection to the prince's government. Then is the natural violence of despotism inflamed and aggravated by hatred and revenge. To deserve well of the state is a crime against the prince. To be popular, and to be a traitor, are considered as synonymous terms. Even virtue is dangerous, as an aspiring quality, that claims an esteem by itself, and independent of the countenance of the court. What has been said of the chief, is true of the inferiour officers of this species of government; each in his province exercising the same tyranny, and grinding the people by an oppression, the more severely felt, as it is near them, and exercised by base and subordinate persons. For the gross of the people; they are considered as a mere herd of cattle; and really in a little time become no better; all principle of honest pride, all sense of the dignity of their nature, is lost in their slavery. The day, says Homer, which makes a man a slave, takes away half his worth; and in fact, he loses every impulse to action, but that low and base one of fear.—In this kind of government, human nature is not only abused, and insulted, but it is actually degraded and sunk into a species of brutality. The consideration of this made Mr. Locke say, with

great justice, that a government of this kind was worse than anarchy; indeed it is so abhorred and detested by all who live under forms that have a milder appearance, that there is scarcely a rational man in Europe, that would not prefer death to Asiatick despotism. Here then we have the acknowledgement of a great philosopher, that an irregular state of nature is preferable to such a government; we have the consent of all sensible and generous men, who carry it yet further, and avow that death itself is preferable; and yet this species of government, so justly condemned, and so generally detested, is what infinitely the greater part of mankind groan under, and have groaned under from the beginning. So that, by sure and uncontested principles, the greatest part of the governments on earth must be concluded tyrannies, impostures, violations of the natural rights of mankind, and worse than the most disorderly anarchies. How much other forms exceed this, we shall consider immediately.

In all parts of the world, mankind, however debased, retains still the sense of *feeling*; the weight of tyranny, at last, becomes insupportable; but the remedy is not so easy: in general, the only remedy by which they attempt to cure the tyranny, is to change the tyrant. This is, and always was, the case, for the greater part. In some countries, however, were found men of more penetration; who

who discovered, "*that to live by one man's will,* "*was the cause of all men's misery.*" They therefore changed their former method, and, assembling the men in their several societies, the most respectable for their understanding and fortunes, they confided to them the charge of the publick welfare. This originally formed what is called an *aristocracy.* They hoped, it would be impossible that such a number could ever join in any design against the general good; and they promised themselves a great deal of security and happiness, from the united councils of so many able and experienced persons. But it is now found by abundant experience, that an *aristocracy,* and a *despotism,* differ but in name; and that a people, who are in general excluded from any share of the legislative, are, to all intents and purposes, as much slaves, when twenty, independent of them, govern, as when but one domineers. The tyranny is even more felt, as every individual of the nobles has the haughtiness of a sultan; the people are more miserable, as they seem on the verge of liberty, from which they are for ever debarred: this fallacious idea of liberty, whilst it presents a vain shadow of happiness to the subject, binds faster the chains of his subjection. What is left undone by the natural avarice and pride of those who are raised above the others, is completed by their suspicions, and their dread of losing an authority, which has

no support in the common utility of the nation. A Genoese, or a Venetian republick, is a concealed *despotism;* where you find the same pride of the rulers, the same base subjection of the people, the same bloody maxims of a suspicious policy. In one respect the *aristocracy* is worse than the *despotism.* A body politick, whilst it retains its authority, never changes its maxims; a *despotism,* which is this day horrible to a supreme degree, by the caprice natural to the heart of man, may, by the same caprice otherwise exerted, be as lovely the next; in a succession, it is possible to meet with some good princes. If there have been Tiberiuses, Caligulas, Neros, there have been likewise the serener days of Vespasians, Tituses, Trajans, and Antonines; but a body politick is not influenced by caprice or whim; it proceeds in a regular manner; its succession is insensible; and every man as he enters it, either has, or soon attains, the spirit of the whole body. Never was it known, that an *aristocracy,* which was haughty and tyrannical in one century, became easy and mild in the next. In effect, the yoke of this species of government is so galling, that whenever the people have got the least power, they have shaken it off with the utmost indignation, and established a popular form. And when they have not had strength enough to support themselves, they have thrown themselves into the arms of *despotism,* as

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the more eligible of the two evils. This latter was the case of Denmark, who sought a refuge from the oppression of its nobility, in the strong hold of arbitrary power. Poland has at present the name of republick, and it is one of the *aristocratick* form; but it is well known, that the little-finger of this government is heavier than the loins of arbitrary power in most nations. The people are not only politically, but personally, slaves, and treated with the utmost indignity. The republick of Venice is somewhat more moderate; yet even here, so heavy is the *aristocratick* yoke, that the nobles have been obliged to enervate the spirit of their subjects by every sort of debauchery; they have denied them the liberty of reason, and they have made them amends, by what a base soul will think a more valuable liberty, by not only allowing, but encouraging, them to corrupt themselves in the most scandalous manner. They consider their subjects as the farmer does the hog he keeps to feast upon. He holds him fast in his stye, but allows him to wallow as much as he pleases in his beloved filth and gluttony. So scandalously debauched a people as that of Venice is to be met with no where else. High, low, men, women, clergy, and laity, are all alike. The ruling nobility are no less afraid of one another, than they are of the people; and, for that reason, politically enervate their own body by the same

effeminate luxury by which they corrupt their subjects. They are impoverished by every means which can be invented; and they are kept in a perpetual terrour by the horrours of a state-inquisition. Here you see a people deprived of all rational freedom, and tyrannized over by about two thousand men; and yet this body of two thousand are so far from enjoying any liberty by the subjection of the rest, that they are in an infinitely severer state of slavery; they make themselves the most degenerate and unhappy of mankind, for no other purpose than that they may the more effectually contribute to the misery of a whole nation. In short, the regular and methodical proceedings of an *aristocracy* are more intolerable than the very excesses of a *despotism*, and, in general, much further from any remedy.

Thus, my Lord, we have pursued *aristocracy* through its whole progress; we have seen the seeds, the growth, and the fruit. It could boast none of the advantages of a *despotism*, miserable as those advantages were, and it was overloaded with an exuberance of mischiefs, unknown even to *despotism* itself. In effect, it is no more than a disorderly tyranny. This form therefore could be little approved, even in speculation, by those who were capable of thinking, and could be less borne in practice by any who were capable of feeling. However, the fruitful policy of man was not yet exhausted.

exhausted. He had yet another farthing-candle to supply the deficiencies of the sun. This was the third form, known by political writers under the name of *democracy*. Here the people transacted all publick business, or the greater part of it, in their own persons: their laws were made by themselves, and upon any failure of duty, their officers were accountable to themselves, and to them only. In all appearance, they had secured by this method the advantages of order and good government, without paying their liberty for the purchase. Now, my Lord, we are come to the master-piece of Grecian refinement, and Roman solidity, a popular government. The earliest and most celebrated republick of this model was that of Athens. It was constructed by no less an artist than the celebrated poet and philosopher, Solon. But no sooner was this political vessel launched from the stocks, than it overset, even in the lifetime of the builder. A tyranny immediately supervened; not by a foreign conquest, not by accident, but by the very nature and constitution of a *democracy*. An artful man became popular, the people had power in their hands, and they devolved a considerable share of their power upon their favourite; and the only use he made of this power, was to plunge those who gave it, into slavery. Accident restored their liberty, and the same good fortune produced men of uncommon abilities and uncom-

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mon virtues amongst them. But these abilities were suffered to be of little service either to their possessors or to the state. Some of these men, for whose sakes alone we read their history, they banished; others they imprisoned; and all they treated with various circumstances of the most shameful ingratitude. Republicks have many things in the spirit of absolute monarchy, but none more than this. A shining merit is ever hated or suspected in a popular assembly, as well as in a court; and all services done the state are looked upon as dangerous to the rulers, whether sultans or senators. The *Ostracism* at Athens was built upon this principle. The giddy people, whom we have now under consideration, being elated with some flashes of success, which they owed to nothing less than any merit of their own, began to tyrannize over their equals, who had associated with them for their common defence. With their prudence they renounced all appearance of justice. They entered into wars rashly and wantonly. If they were unsuccessful, instead of growing wiser by their misfortune, they threw the whole blame of their own misconduct on the ministers who had advised, and the generals who had conducted, those wars; until by degrees they had cut off all who could serve them in their councils or their battles. If at any time these wars had an happier issue, it was no less difficult to deal with them

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on account of their pride and insolence. Furious in their adversity, tyrannical in their successes, a commander had more trouble to concert his defence before the people, than to plan the operations of the campaign. It was not uncommon for a general, under the horrid *despotism* of the Roman emperours, to be ill received in proportion to the greatness of his services. Agricola is a strong instance of this. No man had done greater things, nor with more honest ambition. Yet, on his return to court, he was obliged to enter Rome with all the secresy of a criminal. He went to the palace, not like a victorious commander who had merited and might demand the greatest rewards, but, like an offender who had come to supplicate a pardon for his crimes. His reception was answerable; "*Exceptusque brevi osculo et nullo ser-*" *mone, turbæ servientium immixtus est.*" Yet in that worst season of this worst of monarchical* tyrannies, modesty, discretion, and a coolness of temper, formed some kind of security even for the highest merit. But at Athens, the nicest and best studied behaviour was not a sufficient guard for a man of great capacity. Some of their bravest commanders were obliged to fly their country, some to enter into the service of its enemies, rather than

* Sciant quibus moris illicita mirari, posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos viros, &c. See 42, to the end of it.

than abide a popular determination on their conduct, lest, as one of them said, their giddiness might make the people condemn where they meant to acquit; to throw in a black bean even when they intended a white one.

The Athenians made a very rapid progress to the most enormous excesses. The people, under no restraint, soon grew dissolute, luxurious, and idle. They renounced all labour, and began to subsist themselves from the public revenues. They lost all concern for their common honour or safety, and could bear no advice that tended to reform them. At this time truth became offensive to those lords the people, and most highly dangerous to the speaker. The orators no longer ascended the *rostrum*, but to corrupt them further with the most fulsome adulation. These orators were all bribed by foreign princes on the one side or the other. And besides its own parties, in this city there were parties, and avowed ones too, for the Persians, Spartans, and Macedonians, supported each of them by one or more demagogues pensioned and bribed to this iniquitous service. The people, forgetful of all virtue and public spirit, and intoxicated with the flatteries of their orators (these courtiers of republicks, and endowed with the distinguishing characteristicks of all other courtiers) this people, I say, at last arrived at that pitch of madness, that they coolly and deliberately,

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by an express law, made it capital for any man to propose an application of the immense sums squandered in public shows, even to the most necessary purposes of the state. When you see the people of this republick banishing and murdering their best and ablest citizens, dissipating the publick treasure with the most senseless extravagance, and spending their whole time, as spectators or actors, in playing, fiddling, dancing and singing, does it not, my Lord, strike your imagination with the image of a sort of complex Nero? And does it not strike you with the greater horrour, when you observe, not one man only, but a whole city, grown drunk with pride and power, running with a rage of folly into the same mean and senseless debauchery and extravagance? But if this people resembled Nero in their extravagance, much more did they resemble and even exceed him in cruelty and injustice. In the time of Pericles, one of the most celebrated times in the history of that commonwealth, a king of Egypt sent them a donation of corn. This they were mean enough to accept. And had the Egyptian prince intended the ruin of this city of wicked bedlamites, he could not have taken a more effectual method to do it, than by such an ensnaring largess. The distribution of this bounty caused a quarrel; the majority set on foot an enquiry into the title of the citizens; and upon a vain pretence of illegiti-

macy, newly and occasionally set up, they deprived of their share of the royal donation no less than five thousand of their own body. They went further; they disfranchised them; and having once begun with an act of injustice, they could set no bounds to it. Not content with cutting them off from the rights of citizens, they plundered these unfortunate wretches of all their substance; and, to crown this master-piece of violence and tyranny, they actually sold every man of the five thousand as slaves in the publick market. Observe, my Lord, that the five thousand we here speak of were cut off from a body of no more than nineteen thousand; for the entire number of citizens was no greater at that time. Could the tyrant who wished the Roman people but one neck; could the tyrant Caligula himself have done, nay, he could scarcely wish for, a greater mischief, than to have cut off, at one stroke, a fourth of his people? Or has the cruelty of that series of sanguine tyrants, the Cæsars, ever presented such a piece of flagrant and extensive wickedness? The whole history of this celebrated republick is but one tissue of rashness, folly, ingratitude, injustice, tumult, violence, and tyranny, and, indeed, of every species of wickedness that can well be imagined. This was a city of wise men, in which a minister could not exercise his functions; a warlike people, amongst whom a

general did not dare either to gain or lose a battle; a learned nation in which a philosopher could not venture on a free enquiry. This was the city which banished Themistocles, starved Aristides, forced into exile Miltiades, drove out Anaxagoras, and poisoned Socrates. This was a city which changed the form of its government with the moon; eternal conspiracies, revolutions daily, nothing fixed and established. A republick, as an antient philosopher has observed, is no one species of government, but a magazine of every species: here you find every sort of it, and that in the worst form. As there is a perpetual change, one rising and the other falling, you have all the violence and wicked policy by which a beginning power must always acquire its strength, and all the weakness by which falling states are brought to a complete destruction.

Rome has a more venerable aspect than Athens; and she conducted her affairs, so far as related to the ruin and oppression of the greatest part of the world, with greater wisdom and more uniformity. But the domestick economy of these two states was nearly or altogether the same. An internal dissension constantly tore to pieces the bowels of the Roman commonwealth. You find the same confusion, the same factions, which subsisted at Athens, the same tumults, the same revolutions, and in fine, the same slavery; if perhaps

their former condition did not deserve that name altogether as well. All other republicks were of the same character. Florence was a transcript of Athens. And the modern republicks, as they approach more or less to the democratick form, partake more or less of the nature of those which I have described.

We are now at the close of our review of the three simple forms of artificial society; and we have shewn them, however they may differ in name, or in some slight circumstances, to be all alike in effect: in effect, to be all tyrannies. But suppose we were inclined to make the most ample concessions; let us concede Athens, Rome, Carthage, and two or three more of the antient, and as many of the modern, commonwealths, to have been, or to be, free and happy, and to owe their freedom and happiness to their political constitution. Yet, allowing all this, what defence does this make for artificial society in general, that these inconsiderable spots of the globe have for some short space of time stood as exceptions to a charge so general? But when we call these governments free, or concede that their citizens were happier than those which lived under different forms, it is merely *ex abundanti*. For we should be greatly mistaken, if we really thought that the majority of the people, which filled these cities, enjoyed even that nominal political freedom of which I have spoken so much

much already. In reality, they had no part of it. In Athens there were usually from ten to thirty thousand freemen: this was the utmost. But the slaves usually amounted to four hundred thousand, and sometimes to a great many more. The freemen of Sparta and Rome were not more numerous in proportion to those whom they held in a slavery even more terrible than the Athenian. Therefore state the matter fairly: the free states never formed, though they were taken altogether, the thousandth part of the habitable globe; the freemen in these states were never the twentieth part of the people, and the time they subsisted is scarce any thing in that immense ocean of duration in which time and slavery are so nearly commensurate. Therefore call these free states, or popular governments, or what you please; when we consider the majority of their inhabitants, and regard the natural rights of mankind, they must appear in reality and truth, no better than pitiful and oppressive oligarchies.

After so fair an examen, wherein nothing has been exaggerated; no fact produced which cannot be proved, and none which has been produced in any wise forced or strained, while thousands have, for brevity, been omitted; after so candid a discussion in all respects; what slave so passive, what bigot so blind, what enthusiast so headlong, what politician so hardened, as to stand up in

defence of a system calculated for a curse to mankind? a curse under which they smart and groan to this hour, without thoroughly knowing the nature of the disease, and wanting understanding or courage to supply the remedy.

I need not excuse myself to your Lordship, nor, I think, to any honest man, for the zeal I have shewn in this cause; for it is an honest zeal, and in a good cause. I have defended natural religion against a confederacy of atheists and divines. I now plead for natural society against politicians, and for natural reason against all three. When the world is in a fitter temper than it is at present to hear truth, or when I shall be more indifferent about its temper, my thoughts may become more publick. In the mean time, let them repose in my own bosom, and in the bosoms of such men as are fit to be initiated in the sober mysteries of truth and reason. My antagonists have already done as much as I could desire. Parties in religion and politicks make sufficient discoveries concerning each other, to give a sober man a proper caution against them all. The monarchick, and aristocratical, and popular, partisans, have been jointly laying their axes to the root of all government, and have in their turns proved each other absurd and inconvenient. In vain you tell me that artificial government is good, but that I fall out only with the abuse. The thing! the thing itself

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is the abuse! Observe, my Lord, I pray you, that grand errour upon which all artificial legislative power is founded. It was observed, that men had ungovernable passions, which made it necessary to guard against the violence they might offer to each other. They appointed governours over them for this reason! But a worse and more perplexing difficulty arises, how to be defended against the governours? *Quis, custodiet ipsos custodes?* In vain they change from a single person to a few. These few have the passions of the one; and they unite to strengthen themselves, and to secure the gratification of their lawless passions at the expense of the general good. In vain do we fly to the many. The case is worse; their passions are less under the government of reason, they are augmented by the contagion, and defended against all attacks by their multitude.

I have purposely avoided the mention of the mixed form of government, for reasons that will be very obvious to your Lordship. But my caution can avail me but little. You will not fail to urge it against me in favour of political society. You will not fail to shew how the errours of the several simple modes are corrected by a mixture of all of them, and a proper balance of the several powers in such a state. I confess, my Lord, that this has been long a darling mistake of my own; and that of all the sacrifices I have made to truth,

this has been by far the greatest. When I confess that I think this notion a mistake, I know to whom I am speaking, for I am satisfied that reasons are like liquors, and there are some of such a nature as none but strong heads can bear. There are few with whom I can communicate so freely as with Pope. But Pope cannot bear every truth. He has a timidity which hinders the full exertion of his faculties, almost as effectually as bigotry cramps those of the general herd of mankind. But whoever is a genuine follower of truth keeps his eye steady upon his guide, indifferent whither he is led, provided that she is the leader. And, my Lord, if it be properly considered, it were infinitely better to remain possessed by the whole legion of vulgar mistakes, than to reject some, and at the same time to retain a fondness for others altogether as absurd and irrational. The first has at least a consistency, that makes a man, however erroneously, uniform at least; but the latter way of proceeding is such an inconsistent chimera and jumble of philosophy, and vulgar prejudice, that hardly any thing more ridiculous can be conceived. Let us therefore freely, and without fear or prejudice, examine this last contrivance of policy. And, without considering how near the quick our instruments may come, let us search it to the bottom.

First then, all men are agreed that this junction

tion of regal, aristocratick, and popular power, must form a very complex, nice, and intricate machine, which being composed of such a variety of parts, with such opposite tendencies and movements, it must be liable on every accident to be disordered. To speak without metaphor, such a government must be liable to frequent cabals, tumults, and revolutions, from its very constitution. These are undoubtedly as ill effects as can happen in a society; for in such a case, the closeness acquired by community, instead of serving for mutual defence, serves only to increase the danger. Such a system is like a city, where trades that require constant fires are much exercised, where the houses are built of combustible materials, and where they stand extremely close.

In the second place, the several constituent parts having their distinct rights, and these many of them so necessary to be determined with exactness, are yet so indeterminate in their nature, that it becomes a new and constant source of debate and confusion. Hence it is, that whilst the business of government should be carrying on, the question is, Who has a right to exercise this or that function of it, or what men have power to keep their offices in any function? Whilst this contest continues, and whilst the balance in any sort continues, it has never any remission; all manner of abuses and villainies in officers remain unpunished;

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the greatest frauds and robberies in the publick revenues are committed in defiance of justice; and abuses grow, by time and impunity, into customs; until they prescribe against the laws, and grow too inveterate often to admit a cure, unless such as may be as bad as the disease.

Thirdly, the several parts of this species of government, though united, preserve the spirit which each form has separately. Kings are ambitious; the nobility haughty; and the populace tumultuous and ungovernable. Each party, however in appearance peaceable, carries on a design upon the others; and it is owing to this, that in all questions, whether concerning foreign or domestick affairs, the whole generally turns more upon some party-matter than upon the nature of the thing itself; whether such a step will diminish or augment the power of the crown, or how far the privileges of the subject are likely to be extended or restricted by it. And these questions are constantly resolved, without any consideration of the merits of the cause, merely as the parties who uphold these jarring interests may chance to prevail; and as they prevail, the balance is overset, now upon one side, now upon the other. The government is, one day, arbitrary power in a single person; another a juggling confederacy of a few to cheat the prince and enslave the people; and the third, a frantick and unmanageable democracy.

cracy. The great instrument of all these changes, and what infuses a peculiar venom into all of them, is party. It is of no consequence what the principles of any party, or what their pretensions are; the spirit which actuates all parties is the same; the spirit of ambition, of self-interest, of oppression, and treachery. This spirit entirely reverses all the principles which a benevolent nature has erected within us; all honesty, all equal justice, and even the ties of natural society, the natural affections. In a word, my Lord, we have all *seen*, and, if any outward considerations were worthy the lasting concern of a wise man, we have some of us *felt*, such oppression from party government as no other tyranny can parallel. We behold daily the most important rights, rights upon which all the others depend, we behold these rights determined in the last resort, without the least attention even to the appearance or colour of justice; we behold this without emotion, because we have grown up in the constant view of such practices; and we are not surprised to hear a man requested to be a knave and a traitor, with as much indifference as if the most ordinary favour were asked; and we hear this request refused, not because it is a most unjust and unreasonable desire, but, because this worthy has already engaged his injustice to another. These and many more points I am far from spreading to their full extent.

extent. You are sensible that I do not put forth half my strength; and you cannot be at a loss for the reason. A man is allowed sufficient freedom of thought, provided he knows how to chuse his subject properly. You may criticise freely upon the Chinese constitution, and observe with as much severity as you please upon the absurd tricks, or destructive bigotry of the bonzees. But the scene is changed as you come homeward, and atheism or treason may be the names given in Britain, to what would be reason and truth if asserted of China. I submit to the condition, and though I have a notorious advantage before me, I wave the pursuit. For else, my Lord, it is very obvious what a picture might be drawn of the excesses of party even in our own nation. I could shew, that the same faction has, in one reign, promoted popular seditions, and, in the next, been a patron of tyranny: I could shew, that they have all of them betrayed the publick safety at all times, and have very frequently with equal perfidy made a market of their own cause, and their own associates. I could shew how vehemently they have contended for names, and how silently they have passed over things of the last importance. And I could demonstrate, that they have had the opportunity of doing all this mischief, nay, that they themselves had their origin and growth from that complex form of government, which we are wisely taught

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to look upon as so great a blessing. Revolve, my Lord, our history from the conquest. We scarcely ever had a prince, who by fraud, or violence, had not made some infringement on the constitution. We scarcely ever had a parliament which knew, when it attempted to set limits to the royal authority, how to set limits to its own. Evils we have had continually calling for reformation, and reformations more grievous than any evils. Our boasted liberty sometimes trodden down, sometimes giddily set up, and ever precariously fluctuating and unsettled; it has only been kept alive by the blasts of continual feuds, wars, and conspiracies. In no country in Europe has the scaffold so often blushed with the blood of its nobility. Confiscations, banishments, attainders, executions, make a large part of the history of such of our families as are not utterly extinguished by them. Formerly indeed things had a more ferocious appearance than they have at this day. In these early and unrefined ages, the jarring part of a certain chaotick constitution supported their several pretensions by the sword. Experience and policy have since taught other methods.

At nunc res agitur tenui pulmone rubetæ.

But how far corruption, venality, the contempt of honour, the oblivion of all duty to our country, and

and the most abandoned public prostitution, are preferable to the more glaring and violent effects of faction, I will not presume to determine. Sure I am that they are very great evils.

I have done with the forms of government. During the course of my inquiry you may have observed a very material difference between my manner of reasoning and that which is in use amongst the abettors of artificial society. They form their plans upon what seems most eligible to their imaginations, for the ordering of mankind. I discover the mistakes in those plans, from the real known consequences which have resulted from them. They have enlisted reason to fight against itself, and employ its whole force to prove that it is an insufficient guide to them in the conduct of their lives. But unhappily for us, in proportion as we have deviated from the plain rule of our nature, and turned our reason against itself, in that proportion have we increased the follies and miseries of mankind. The more deeply we penetrate into the labyrinth of art, the further we find ourselves from those ends for which we entered it. This has happened in almost every species of artificial society, and in all times. We found, or we thought we found, an inconvenience in having every man the judge of his own cause. Therefore judges were set up, at first, with discretionary powers. But it was soon found a

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miserable slavery to have our lives and properties precarious, and hanging upon the arbitrary determination of any one man, or set of men. We fled to laws as a remedy for this evil. By these we persuaded ourselves we might know with some certainty upon what ground we stood. But lo! differences arose upon the sense and interpretation of these laws. Thus we were brought back to our old incertitude. New laws were made to expound the old; and new difficulties arose upon the new laws; as words multiplied, opportunities of cavilling upon them multiplied also. Then recourse was had to notes, comments, glosses, reports, *responsa prudentum*, learned readings: eagle stood against eagle: authority was set up against authority. Some were allured by the modern, others reverenced the antient. The new were more enlightened, the old were more venerable. Some adopted the comment, others stuck to the text. The confusion increased, the mist thickened, until it could be discovered no longer what was allowed or forbidden, what things were in property, and what common. In this uncertainty, (uncertain even to the professors, an Egyptian darkness to the rest of mankind) the contending parties felt themselves more effectually ruined by the delay than they could have been by the injustice of any decision. Our inheritances are become a prize for disputation; and disputes and litigations are become an inheritance.

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The professors of artificial law have always walked hand in hand with the professors of artificial theology. As their end, in confounding the reason of man, and abridging his natural freedom, is exactly the same, they have adjusted the means to that end in a way entirely similar. The divine thunders out his *anathemas* with more noise and terrour against the breach of one of his positive institutions, or the neglect of some of his trivial forms, than against the neglect or breach of those duties and commandments of natural religion, which by these forms and institutions he pretends to enforce. The lawyer has his forms, and his positive institutions too, and he adheres to them with a veneration altogether as religious. The worst cause cannot be so prejudicial to the litigant, as his advocate's or attorney's ignorance or neglect of these forms. A law-suit is like an ill-managed dispute, in which the first object is soon out of sight, and the parties end upon a matter wholly foreign to that on which they began. In a law-suit the question is, who has a right to a certain house or farm? And this question is daily determined, not upon the evidence of the right, but upon the observance or neglect of some forms of words in use with the gentlemen of the robe, about which there is even amongst themselves such a disagreement, that the most experienced veterans in the profession can never be positively assured that they are not mistaken.

Let

Let us expostulate with these learned sages, these priests of the sacred temple of justice. Are we judges of our own property? By no means. You then, who are initiated into the mysteries of the blindfold goddess, inform me whether I have a right to eat the bread I have earned by the hazard of my life, or the sweat of my brow? The grave doctor answers me in the affirmative; the reverend serjeant replies in the negative; the learned barrister reasons upon one side and upon the other, and concludes nothing. What shall I do? An antagonist starts up and presses me hard. I enter the field, and retain these three persons to defend my cause. My cause, which two farmers from the plough could have decided in half an hour, takes the court twenty years. I am however at the end of my labour, and have in reward for all my toil and vexation, a judgment in my favour. But hold—a sagacious commander, in the adversary's army, has found a flaw in the proceeding. My triumph is turned into mourning. I have used *or*, instead of *and*, or some mistake, small in appearance, but dreadful in its consequences; and have the whole of my success quashed in a writ of errour. I remove my suit; I shift from court to court; I fly from equity to law, and from law to equity; equal uncertainty attends me every where; and a mistake in which I had no share, decides at once upon my liberty and property, sending me

from the court to a prison, and adjudging my family to beggary and famine. I am innocent, gentlemen, of the darkness and uncertainty of your science. I never darkened it with absurd and contradictory notions, nor confounded it with chicane and sophistry. You have excluded me from any share in the conduct of my own cause; the science was too deep for me; I acknowledged it; but it was too deep even for yourselves: you have made the way so intricate, that you are yourselves lost in it; you err, and you punish me for your errours.

The delay of the law is, your Lordship will tell me, a trite topick, and which of its abuses have not been too severely felt not to be complained of? A man's property is to serve for the purposes of his support; and, therefore, to delay a determination concerning that, is the worst injustice, because it cuts off the very end and purpose for which I applied to the judicature for relief. Quite contrary in the case of a man's life; there the determination can hardly be too much protracted. Mistakes in this case are as often fallen into as many other; and if the judgment is sudden, the mistakes are the most irretrievable of all others. Of this the gentlemen of the robe are themselves sensible, and they have brought it into a maxim. *De morte hominis nulla est cunctatio longa.* But what could have induced them to reverse the rules, and to contradict

contradict that reason which dictated them, I am utterly unable to guess. A point concerning property, which ought, for the reasons I just mentioned, to be most speedily decided, frequently exercises the wit of successions of lawyers, for many generations. *Multa virûm volvens durando sæcula vincit.* But the question concerning a man's life, that great question in which no delay ought to be counted tedious, is commonly determined in twenty-four hours at the utmost. It is not to be wondered at, that injustice and absurdity should be inseparable companions.

Ask of politicians the end for which laws were originally designed; and they will answer, that the laws were designed as a protection for the poor and weak, against the oppression of the rich and powerful. But surely no pretence can be so ridiculous; a man might as well tell me he has taken off my load, because he has changed the burthen. If the poor man is not able to support his suit, according to the vexatious and expensive manner established in civilized countries, has not the rich as great an advantage over him as the strong has over the weak in a state of nature? But we will not place the state of nature, which is the reign of God, in competition with political society, which is the absurd usurpation of man. In a state of nature, it is true, that a man of superior force may beat or rob me; but then it is true, that I am at

full liberty to defend myself, or make reprisal by surprise or by cunning, or by any other way in which I may be superiour to him. But in political society, a rich man may rob me in another way. I cannot defend myself; for money is the only weapon with which we are allowed to fight. And if I attempt to avenge myself, the whole force of that society is ready to complete my ruin.

A good parson once said, that where mystery begins, religion ends. Cannot I say, as truly at least, of human laws, that where mystery begins, justice ends? It is hard to say, whether the doctors of law or divinity have made the greater advances in the lucrative business of mystery. The lawyers, as well as the theologians, have erected another reason besides natural reason; and the result has been, another justice besides natural justice. They have so bewildered the world and themselves in unmeaning forms and ceremonies, and so perplexed the plainest matters with metaphysical jargon, that it carries the highest danger to a man out of that profession, to make the least step without their advice and assistance. Thus by confining to themselves the knowledge of the foundation of all men's lives and properties, they have reduced all mankind into the most abject and servile dependence. We are tenants at the will of these gentlemen for every thing; and a metaphysical quibble is to decide whether the greatest villain breathing

shall

shall meet his deserts, or escape with impunity, or whether the best man in the society shall not be reduced to the lowest and most despicable condition it affords. In a word, my Lord, the injustice, delay, puerility, false refinement, and affected mystery of the law are such, that many who live under it come to admire and envy the expedition, simplicity, and equality of arbitrary judgments. I need insist the less on this article to your Lordship, as you have frequently lamented the miseries derived to us from artificial law, and your candour is the more to be admired and applauded in this, as your Lordship's noble house has derived its wealth and its honours from that profession.

Before we finish our examination of artificial society, I shall lead your Lordship into a closer consideration of the relations which it gives birth to, and the benefits, if such they are, which result from these relations. The most obvious division of society is into rich and poor; and it is no less obvious, that the number of the former bear a great disproportion to those of the latter. The whole business of the poor is to administer to the idleness, folly, and luxury of the rich; and that of the rich, in return, is to find the best methods of confirming the slavery and increasing the burthens of the poor. In a state of nature, it is an invariable law, that a man's acquisitions are in proportion to his labours. In a state of artificial

society, it is a law as constant and as invariable, that those who labour most enjoy the fewest things; and that those who labour not at all have the greatest number of enjoyments. A constitution of things this, strange and ridiculous beyond expression! We scarce believe a thing when we are told it, which we actually see before our eyes every day without being in the least surprised. I suppose that there are in Great Britain upwards of an hundred thousand people employed in lead, tin, iron, copper, and coal mines; these unhappy wretches scarce ever see the light of the sun; they are buried in the bowels of the earth; there they work at a severe and dismal task, without the least prospect of being delivered from it; they subsist upon the coarsest and worst sort of fare; they have their health miserably impaired, and their lives cut short, by being perpetually confined in the close vapour of these malignant minerals. An hundred thousand more at least are tortured without remission by the suffocating smoke, intense fires, and constant drudgery necessary in refining and managing the products of those mines. If any man informed us that two hundred thousand innocent persons were condemned to so intolerable slavery, how should we pity the unhappy sufferers, and how great would be our just indignation against those who inflicted so cruel and ignominious a punishment! This is an instance, I could

not

not wish a stronger—of the numberless things which we pass by in their common dress, yet which shock us when they are nakedly represented. But this number, considerable as it is, and the slavery, with all its baseness and horrour, which we have at home, is nothing to what the rest of the world affords of the same nature. Millions daily bathed in the poisonous damps and destructive effluvia of lead, silver, copper, and arsenick. To say nothing of those other employments, those stations of wretchedness and contempt, in which civil society has placed the numerous *enfans perdus* of her army. Would any rational man submit to one of the most tolerable of these drudgeries, for all the artificial enjoyments which policy has made to result from them? By no means. And yet need I suggest to your Lordship, that those who find the means, and those who arrive at the end, are not at all the same persons. On considering the strange and unaccountable fancies and contrivances of artificial reason, I have somewhere called this earth the Bedlam of our system. Looking now upon the effects of some of those fancies, may we not with equal reason call it likewise the Newgate and the Bridewell of the universe? Indeed the blindness of one part of mankind co-operating with the phrenzy and villainy of the other, has been the real builder of this respectable fabrick of political society: and as the

 blindness

blindness of mankind has caused their slavery, in return their state of slavery is made a pretence for continuing them in a state of blindness; for the politician will tell you gravely, that their life of servitude disqualifies the greater part of the race of man for a search of truth, and supplies them with no other than mean and insufficient ideas. This is but too true; and this is one of the reasons for which I blame such institutions.

In a misery of this sort, admitting some few lenitives, and those too but a few, nine parts in ten of the whole race of mankind drudge through life. It may be urged perhaps, in palliation of this, that, at least, the rich few find a considerable and real benefit from the wretchedness of the many. But is this so in fact? Let us examine the point with a little more attention. For this purpose the rich in all societies may be thrown into two classes. The first is of those who are powerful as well as rich, and conduct the operations of the vast political machine. The other is of those who employ their riches wholly in the acquisition of pleasure. As to the first sort, their continual care, and anxiety, their toilsome days, and sleepless nights, are next to proverbial. These circumstances are sufficient almost to level their condition to that of the unhappy majority; but there are other circumstances which place them in a far lower condition. Not only their understandings

labour continually, which is the severest labour, but their hearts are torn by the worst, most troublesome, and insatiable of all passions, by avarice, by ambition, by fear and jealousy. No part of the mind has rest. Power gradually extirpates from the mind every humane and gentle virtue. Pity, benevolence, friendship, are things almost unknown in high stations. *Veræ amicitiæ rarissime inveniuntur in iis qui in honoribus reque publica versantur,* says Cicero. And indeed courts are the schools where cruelty, pride, dissimulation and treachery are studied and taught in the most vicious perfection. This is a point so clear and acknowledged, that if it did not make a necessary part of my subject, I should pass it by entirely. And this has hindered me from drawing at full length, and in the most striking colours, this shocking picture of the degeneracy and wretchedness of human nature, in that part which is vulgarly thought its happiest and most amiable state. You know from what originals I could copy such pictures. Happy are they who know enough of them to know the little value of the possessors of such things, and of all that they possess; and happy they who have been snatched from that post of danger which they occupy, with the remains of their virtue; loss of honours, wealth, titles, and even the loss of one's country, is nothing in balance with so great an advantage.

Let

Let us now view the other species of the rich, those who devote their time and fortunes to idleness and pleasure. How much happier are they? The pleasures which are agreeable to nature are within the reach of all, and therefore can form no distinction in favour of the rich. The pleasures which art forces up are seldom sincere, and never satisfying. What is worse, this constant application to pleasure takes away from the enjoyment, or rather turns it into the nature of a very burdensome and laborious business. It has consequences much more fatal. It produces a weak valetudinary state of body, attended by all those horrid disorders, and yet more horrid methods of cure, which are the result of luxury on the one hand, and the weak and ridiculous efforts of human art on the other. The pleasures of such men are scarcely felt as pleasures; at the same time that they bring on pains and diseases, which are felt but too severely. The mind has its share of the misfortune; it grows lazy and enervate, unwilling and unable to search for truth, and utterly uncapable of knowing, much less of relishing real happiness. The poor by their excessive labour, and the rich by their enormous luxury, are set upon a level, and rendered equally ignorant of any knowledge which might conduce to their happiness. A dismal view of the interiour of all civil society! The lower part broken and ground down

down by the most cruel oppression; and the rich by their artificial method of life bringing worse evils on themselves, than their tyranny could possibly inflict on those below them. Very different is the prospect of the natural state. Here there are no wants which nature gives, and in this state men can be sensible of no other wants, which are not to be supplied by a very moderate degree of labour; therefore there is no slavery. Neither is there any luxury, because no single man can supply the materials of it. Life is simple, and there fore it is happy.

I am conscious, my Lord, that your politician will urge in his defence, that this unequal state is highly useful. That without dooming some part of mankind to extraordinary toil, the arts which cultivate life could not be exercised. But I demand of this politician, how such arts came to be necessary? He answers, that civil society could not well exist without them. So that these arts are necessary to civil society, and civil society necessary again to these arts. Thus are we running in a circle, without modesty, and without end, and making one errour and extravagance an excuse for the other. My sentiments about these arts and their cause, I have often discoursed with my friends at large. Pope has expressed them in good verse, where he talks with so much force of reason

reason and elegance of language, in praise of the state of nature:

Then was not pride, nor arts that pride to aid,
Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade.

On the whole, my Lord, if political society, in whatever form, has still made the many the property of the few; if it has introduced labours unnecessary, vices and diseases unknown, and pleasures incompatible with nature; if in all countries it abridges the lives of millions, and renders those of millions more utterly abject and miserable, shall we still worship so destructive an idol, and daily sacrifice to it our health, our liberty, and our peace? Or shall we pass by this monstrous heap of absurd notions, and abominable practices, thinking we have sufficiently discharged our duty in exposing the trifling cheats, and ridiculous juggles of a few mad, designing, or ambitious priests? Alas! my Lord, we labour under a mortal consumption, whilst we are so anxious about the cure of a sore finger. For has not this leviathan of civil power overflowed the earth with a deluge of blood, as if he were made to disport and play therein? We have shewn, that political society, on a moderate calculation, has been the means of murdering several times the number of inhabitants now upon the earth, during its short existence, not upwards of four thousand years in

any

any accounts to be depended on. But we have said nothing of the other, and perhaps as bad, consequence of these wars, which have spilled such seas of blood, and reduced so many millions to a merciless slavery. But these are only the ceremonies performed in the porch of the political temple. Much more horrid ones are seen as you enter it. The several species of government vie with each other in the absurdity of their constitutions, and the oppression which they make their subjects endure. Take them under what form you please, they are in effect but a despotism, and they fall, both in effect and appearance too, after a very short period, into that cruel and detestable species of tyranny: which I rather call it, because we have been educated under another form, than that this is of worse consequences to mankind. For the free governments, for the point of their space, and the moment of their duration, have felt more confusion, and committed more flagrant acts of tyranny, than the most perfect despotick governments which we have ever known. Turn your eye next to the labyrinth of the law, and the iniquity conceived in its intricate recesses. Consider the ravages committed in the bowels of all commonwealths by ambition, by avarice, envy, fraud, open injustice, and pretended friendship; vices which could draw little support from a state of nature, but which blossom and

flourish

flourish in the rankness of political society. Revolve our whole discourse; add to it all those reflections which your own good understanding shall suggest, and make a strenuous effort beyond the reach of vulgar philosophy, to confess that the cause of artificial society is more defenceless even than that of artificial religion; that it is as derogatory from the honour of the Creator, as subversive of human reason, and productive of infinitely more mischief to the human race.

If pretended revelations have caused wars where they were opposed, and slavery where they were received, the pretended wise inventions of politicians have done the same. But the slavery has been much heavier, the wars far more bloody, and both more universal by many degrees. Shew me any mischief produced by the madness or wickedness of theologians, and I will shew you an hundred resulting from the ambition and villainy of conquerors and statesmen. Shew me an absurdity in religion, and I will undertake to shew you an hundred for one in political laws and institutions. If you say, that natural religion is a sufficient guide without the foreign aid of revelation, on what principle should political laws become necessary? Is not the same reason available in theology and in politicks? If the laws of nature are the laws of God, is it consistent with the divine wisdom to prescribe rules to us, and leave the enforcement of

of them to the folly of human institutions? Will you follow truth but to a certain point?

We are indebted for all our miseries to our distrust of that guide which Providence thought sufficient for our condition, our own natural reason, which rejecting both in human and divine things, we have given our necks to the yoke of political and theological slavery. We have renounced the prerogative of man, and it is no wonder that we should be treated like beasts. But our misery is much greater than theirs, as the crime we commit in rejecting the lawful dominion of our reason is greater than any which they can commit. If after all, you should confess all these things, yet plead the necessity of political institutions, weak and wicked as they are, I can argue with equal, perhaps superior, force, concerning the necessity of artificial religion; and every step you advance in your argument, you add a strength to mine. So that if we are resolved to submit our reason and our liberty to civil usurpation, we have nothing to do but to conform as quietly as we can to the vulgar notions which are connected with this, and take up the theology of the vulgar as well as their politicks. But if we think this necessity rather imaginary than real, we should renounce their dreams of society, together with their visions of religion, and vindicate ourselves into perfect liberty.

You

You are, my Lord, but just entering into the world; I am going out of it. I have played long enough to be heartily tired of the drama. Whether I have acted my part in it well or ill, posterity will judge with more candour than I, or than the present age, with our present passions, can possibly pretend to. For my part, I quit it without a sigh, and submit to the sovereign order without murmuring. The nearer we approach to the goal of life, the better we begin to understand the true value of our existence, and the real weight of our opinions. We set out much in love with both; but we leave much behind us as we advance. We first throw away the tales along with the rattles of our nurses; those of the priest keep their hold a little longer; those of our governours the longest of all. But the passions which prop these opinions are withdrawn one after another; and the cool light of reason, at the setting of our life, shews us what a false splendour played upon these objects during our more sanguine seasons. Happy, my Lord, if instructed by my experience, and even by my errours, you come early to make such an estimate of things, as may give freedom and ease to your life. I am happy that such an estimate promises me comfort at my death.

A PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE

ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS

OF THE

SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

TASTE,

AND SEVERAL OTHER ADDITIONS.

PREFACE.

I HAVE endeavoured to make this edition something more full and satisfactory than the first. I have sought with the utmost care, and read with equal attention, every thing which has appeared in publick against my opinions; I have taken advantage of the candid liberty of my friends; and if by these means I have been better enabled to discover the imperfections of the work, the indulgence it has received, imperfect as it was, furnished me with a new motive to spare no reasonable pains for its improvement. Though I have not found sufficient reason, or what appeared to me sufficient, for making any material change in my theory, I have found it necessary in many places to explain, illustrate, and enforce it. I have prefixed an introductory discourse concerning Taste: it is a matter curious in itself; and it leads naturally enough to the principal enquiry. This, with the other explanations, has made the work considerably larger; and by increasing its bulk has, I am afraid, added to its faults; so that, notwithstanding all my attention, it may stand in need of a yet greater share of indulgence than it required at its first appearance.

They who are accustomed to studies of this nature will expect, and they will allow too for many faults. They know that many of the objects of our enquiry are in themselves obscure and intricate; and that many others have been rendered so by affected refinements, or false learning; they know that there are many impediments in the subject, in the prejudices of others, and even in our own, that render it a matter of no small difficulty to shew in a clear light the genuine face of nature. They know that whilst the mind is intent on the general scheme of things, some particular parts must be neglected; that we must often submit the style to the matter, and frequently give up the praise of elegance, satisfied with being clear.

The characters of nature are legible, it is true; but they are not plain enough to enable those who run, to read them. We must make use of a cautious, I had almost said, a timorous method of proceeding. We must not attempt to fly, when we can scarcely pretend to creep. In considering any complex matter, we ought to examine every distinct ingredient in the composition, one by one; and reduce every thing to the utmost simplicity; since the condition of our nature binds us to a strict law and very narrow limits. We ought afterwards to re-examine the principles by the effect of the composition, as well as the composition by that of the principles. We ought to compare our subject

subject with things of a similar nature, and even with things of a contrary nature; for discoveries may be and often are made by the contrast, which would escape us on the single view. The greater number of the comparisons we make, the more general and the more certain our knowledge is likely to prove, as built upon a more extensive and perfect induction.

If any enquiry thus carefully conducted should fail at last of discovering the truth, it may answer an end perhaps as useful, in discovering to us the weakness of our own understanding. If it does not make us knowing, it may make us modest. If it does not preserve us from errour, it may at least from the spirit of errour; and may make us cautious of pronouncing with positiveness or with haste, when so much labour may end in so much uncertainty.

I could wish that in examining this theory, the same method were pursued which I endeavoured to observe in forming it. The objections, in my opinion, ought to be proposed, either to the several principles as they are distinctly considered, or to the justness of the conclusion which is drawn from them. But it is common to pass over both the premises and conclusion in silence, and to produce, as an objection, some poetical passage which does not seem easily accounted for upon the principles I endeavour to establish. This manner

of proceeding I should think very improper. The task would be infinite, if we could establish no principle until we had previously unravelled the complex texture of every image or description to be found in poets and orators. And though we should never be able to reconcile the effect of such images to our principles, this can never overturn the theory itself, whilst it is founded on certain and indisputable facts. A theory founded on experiment, and not assumed, is always good for so much as it explains. Our inability to push it indefinitely is no argument at all against it. This inability may be owing to our ignorance of some necessary *mediums;* to a want of proper application; to many other causes besides a defect in the principles we employ. In reality, the subject requires a much closer attention, than we dare claim from our manner of treating it.

If it should not appear on the face of the work, I must caution the reader against imagining that I intended a full dissertation on the Sublime and Beautiful. My enquiry went no farther than to the origin of these ideas. If the qualities which I have ranged under the head of the Sublime be all found consistent with each other, and all different from those which I place under the head of Beauty; and if those which compose the class of the Beautiful have the same consistency with themselves, and the same opposition to those which are

classed under the denomination of Sublime, I am in little pain whether any body chooses to follow the name I give them or not, provided he allows that what I dispose under different heads are in reality different things in nature. The use I make of the words may be blamed, as too confined or too extended; my meaning cannot well be misunderstood.

To conclude: whatever progress may be made towards the discovery of truth in this matter, I do not repent the pains I have taken in it. The use of such enquiries may be very considerable. Whatever turns the soul inward on itself, tends to concenter its forces, and to fit it for greater and stronger flights of science. By looking into physical causes our minds are opened and enlarged; and in this pursuit, whether we take or whether we lose our game, the chace is certainly of service. Cicero, true as he was to the academick philosophy, and consequently led to reject the certainty of physical, as of every other kind of knowledge, yet freely confesses its great importance to the human understanding; "*Est animorum ingenio-*" "*rumque nostrorum naturale quoddam quasi*" "*pabulum consideratio contemplatioque na-*" "*turæ.*" If we can direct the lights we derive from such exalted speculations, upon the humbler field of the imagination, whilst we investigate the springs, and trace the courses of our passions, we

may not only communicate to the taste a sort of philosophical solidity, but we may reflect back on the severer sciences some of the graces and elegancies of taste, without which the greatest proficiency in those sciences will always have the appearance of something illiberal.

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INTRODUCTION.

ON TASTE.

ON a superficial view, we may seem to differ very widely from each other in our reasonings, and no less in our pleasures: but notwithstanding this difference, which I think to be rather apparent than real, it is probable that the standard both of reason and taste is the same in all human creatures. For if there were not some principles of judgment as well as of sentiment common to all mankind, no hold could possibly be taken either on their reason or their passions, sufficient to maintain the ordinary correspondence of life. It appears indeed to be generally acknowledged, that with regard to truth and falsehood there is something fixed. We find people in their disputes continually appealing to certain tests and standards, which are allowed on all sides, and are supposed to be established in our common nature. But there is not the same obvious concurrence in any uniform or settled principles which relate to

taste. It is even commonly supposed that this delicate and aërial faculty, which seems too volatile to endure even the chains of a definition, cannot be properly tried by any test, nor regulated by any standard. There is so continual a call for the exercise of the reasoning faculty, and it is so much strengthened by perpetual contention, that certain maxims of right reason seem to be tacitly settled amongst the most ignorant. The learned have improved on this rude science, and reduced those maxims into a system. If taste has not been so happily cultivated, it was not that the subject was barren, but that the labourers were few or negligent; for, to say the truth, there are not the same interesting motives to impel us to fix the one, which urge us to ascertain the other. And, after all, if men differ in their opinion concerning such matters, their difference is not attended with the same important consequences; else I make no doubt but that the logick of taste, if I may be allowed the expression, might very possibly be as well digested, and we might come to discuss matters of this nature with as much certainty, as those which seem more immediately within the province of mere reason. And indeed, it is very necessary, at the entrance into such an enquiry as our present, to make this point as clear as possible; for if taste has no fixed principles, if the imagination is not affected according to some invariable and certain

certain laws, our labour is likely to be employed to very little purpose; as it must be judged an useless, if not an absurd undertaking, to lay down rules for caprice, and to set up for a legislator of whims and fancies.

The term taste, like all other figurative terms, is not extremely accurate; the thing which we understand by it is far from a simple and determinate idea in the minds of most men, and it is therefore liable to uncertainty and confusion. I have no great opinion of a definition, the celebrated remedy for the cure of this disorder. For, when we define, we seem in danger of circumscribing nature within the bounds of our own notions, which we often take up by hazard, or embrace on trust, or form out of a limited and partial consideration of the object before us; instead of extending our ideas to take in all that nature comprehends, according to her manner of combining. We are limited in our enquiry by the strict laws to which we have submitted at our setting out.

- - - Circa vilem patulumque morabimur orbem,
Unde pudor proferre pedem vetat aut operis lex.

A definition may be very exact, and yet go but a very little way towards informing us of the nature of the thing defined; but let the virtue of a definition be what it will, in the order of things,

it seems rather to follow than to precede our enquiry, of which it ought to be considered as the result. It must be acknowledged, that the methods of disquisition and teaching may be sometimes different, and on very good reason undoubtedly; but, for my part, I am convinced that the method of teaching which approaches most nearly to the method of investigation is incomparably the best; since, not content with serving up a few barren and lifeless truths, it leads to the stock on which they grew; it tends to set the reader himself in the track of invention, and to direct him into those paths in which the author has made his own discoveries, if he should be so happy as to have made any that are valuable.

But to cut off all pretence for cavilling, I mean by the word Taste no more than that faculty or those faculties of the mind, which are affected with, or which form a judgment of, the works of imagination and the elegant arts. This is, I think, the most general idea of that word, and what is the least connected with any particular theory. And my point in this enquiry is, to find whether there are any principles, on which the imagination is affected, so common to all, so grounded and certain, as to supply the means of reasoning satisfactorily about them. And such principles of taste I fancy there are; however paradoxical it may seem to those, who on a superficial view imagine,

that

that there is so great a diversity of tastes, both in kind and degree, that nothing can be more indeterminate.

All the natural powers in man, which I know, that are conversant about external objects, are the senses; the imagination; and the judgment. And first with regard to the senses. We do and we must suppose, that as the conformation of their organs are nearly or altogether the same in all men, so the manner of perceiving external objects is in all men the same, or with little difference. We are satisfied that what appears to be light to one eye, appears light to another; that what seems sweet to one palate, is sweet to another; that what is dark and bitter to this man, is likewise dark and bitter to that; and we conclude in the same manner of great and little, hard and soft, hot and cold, rough and smooth; and indeed of all the natural qualities and affections of bodies. If we suffer ourselves to imagine, that their senses present to different men different images of things, this sceptical proceeding will make every sort of reasoning on every subject vain and frivolous, even that sceptical reasoning itself which had persuaded us to entertain a doubt concerning the agreement of our perceptions. But as there will be little doubt that bodies present similar images to the whole species, it must necessarily be allowed, that the pleasures and the pains which every object excites in one

man, it must raise in all mankind, whilst it operates naturally, simply, and by its proper powers only: for if we deny this, we must imagine that the same cause, operating in the same manner, and on subjects of the same kind, will produce different effects; which would be highly absurd. Let us first consider this point in the sense of taste, and the rather as the faculty in question has taken its name from that sense. All men are agreed to call vinegar sour, honey sweet, and aloes bitter; and as they are all agreed in finding these qualities in those objects, they do not in the least differ concerning their effects with regard to pleasure and pain. They all concur in calling sweetness pleasant, and sourness and bitterness unpleasant. Here there is no diversity in their sentiments; and that there is not, appears fully from the consent of all men in the metaphors which are taken from the sense of taste. A sour temper, bitter expressions, bitter curses, a bitter fate, are terms well and strongly understood by all. And we are altogether as well understood when we say, a sweet disposition, a sweet person, a sweet condition, and the like. It is confessed, that custom and some other causes have made many deviations from the natural pleasures or pains which belong to these several tastes; but then the power of distinguishing between the natural and the acquired relish remains to the very last. A man frequently comes to prefer the taste of tobacco

tobacco to that of sugar, and the flavour of vinegar to that of milk; but this makes no confusion in tastes, whilst he is sensible that the tobacco and vinegar are not sweet, and whilst he knows that habit alone has reconciled his palate to these alien pleasures. Even with such a person we may speak, and with sufficient precision, concerning tastes. But should any man be found who declares, that to him tobacco has a taste like sugar, and that he cannot distinguish between milk and vinegar; or that tobacco and vinegar are sweet, milk bitter, and sugar sour; we immediately conclude that the organs of this man are out of order, and that his palate is utterly vitiated. We are as far from conferring with such a person upon tastes, as from reasoning concerning the relations of quantity with one who should deny that all the parts together were equal to the whole. We do not call a man of this kind wrong in his notions, but absolutely mad. Exceptions of this sort, in either way, do not at all impeach our general rule, nor make us conclude that men have various principles concerning the relations of quantity or the taste of things. So that when it is said, taste cannot be disputed, it can only mean, that no one can strictly answer what pleasure or pain some particular man may find from the taste of some particular thing. This indeed cannot be disputed; but we may dispute, and with sufficient clearness too, concerning

the things which are naturally pleasing or disagreeable to the sense. But when we talk of any peculiar or acquired relish, then we must know the habits, the prejudices, or the distempers of this particular man, and we must draw our conclusion from those.

This agreement of mankind is not confined to the taste solely. The principle of pleasure derived from sight is the same in all. Light is more pleasing than darkness. Summer, when the earth is clad in green, when the heavens are serene and bright, is more agreeable than winter, when every thing makes a different appearance. I never remember that any thing beautiful, whether a man, a beast, a bird, or a plant, was ever shewn, though it were to an hundred people, that they did not all immediately agree that it was beautiful, though some might have thought that it fell short of their expectation, or that other things were still finer. I believe no man thinks a goose to be more beautiful than a swan, or imagines that what they call a Friezland hen excels a peacock. It must be observed too, that the pleasures of the sight are not near so complicated, and confused, and altered by unnatural habits and associations, as the pleasures of the taste are; because the pleasures of the sight more commonly acquiesce in themselves; and are not so often altered by considerations which are independent of the sight itself.

But

But things do not spontaneously present themselves to the palate as they do to the sight; they are generally applied to it, either as food or as medicine; and, from the qualities which they possess for nutritive or medicinal purposes, they often form the palate by degrees, and by force of these associations. Thus opium is pleasing to Turks, on account of the agreeable delirium it produces. Tobacco is the delight of Dutchmen, as it diffuses a torpor and pleasing stupefaction. Fermented spirits please our common people, because they banish care, and all consideration of future or present evils. All of these would lie absolutely neglected if their properties had originally gone no further than the taste; but all these, together with tea and coffee, and some other things, have passed from the apothecary's shop to our tables, and were taken for health long before they were thought of for pleasure. The effect of the drug has made us use it frequently; and frequent use, combined with the agreeable effect, has made the taste itself at last agreeable. But this does not in the least perplex our reasoning; because we distinguish to the last the acquired from the natural relish. In describing the taste of an unknown fruit, you would scarcely say that it had a sweet and pleasant flavour like tobacco, opium, or garlick, although you spoke to those who were in the constant use of these drugs, and had great pleasure in

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them. There is in all men a sufficient remembrance of the original natural causes of pleasure, to enable them to bring all things offered to their senses to that standard, and to regulate their feelings and opinions by it. Suppose one who had so vitiated his palate as to take more pleasure in the taste of opium than in that of butter or honey, to be presented with a bolus of squills; there is hardly any doubt but that he would prefer the butter or honey to this nauseous morsel, or to any other bitter drug to which he had not been accustomed; which proves that his palate was naturally like that of other men in all things, that it is still like the palate of other men in many things, and only vitiated in some particular points. For in judging of any new thing, even of a taste similar to that which he has been formed by habit to like, he finds his palate affected in the natural manner, and on the common principles. Thus the pleasure of all the senses, of the sight, and even of the taste, that most ambiguous of the senses, is the same in all, high and low, learned and unlearned.

Besides the ideas, with their annexed pains and pleasures, which are presented by the sense; the mind of man possesses a sort of creative power of its own; either in representing at pleasure the images of things in the order and manner in which they were received by the senses, or in combining those images in a new manner, and according to a different

a different order. This power is called imagination; and to this belongs whatever is called wit, fancy, invention, and the like. But it must be observed, that this power of the imagination is incapable of producing any thing absolutely new; it can only vary the disposition of those ideas which it has received from the senses. Now the imagination is the most extensive province of pleasure and pain, as it is the region of our fears and our hopes, and of all our passions that are connected with them; and whatever is calculated to affect the imagination with these commanding ideas, by force of any original natural impression, must have the same power pretty equally over all men. For since the imagination is only the representation of the senses, it can only be pleased or displeased with the images, from the same principle on which the sense is pleased or displeased with the realities; and consequently there must be just as close an agreement in the imaginations as in the senses of men. A little attention will convince us that this must of necessity be the case.

But in the imagination, besides the pain or pleasure arising from the properties of the natural object, a pleasure is perceived from the resemblance which the imitation has to the original: the imagination, I conceive, can have no pleasure but what results from one or other of these causes. And these causes operate pretty uniformly upon all men, because

because they operate by principles in nature, and which are not derived from any particular habits or advantages. Mr. Locke very justly and finely observes of wit, that it is chiefly conversant in tracing resemblances: he remarks, at the same time, that the business of judgment is rather in finding differences. It may perhaps appear, on this supposition, that there is no material distinction between the wit and the judgment, as they both seem to result from different operations of the same faculty of *comparing*. But in reality, whether they are or are not dependent on the same power of the mind, they differ so very materially in many respects, that a perfect union of wit and judgment is one of the rarest things in the world. When two distinct objects are unlike to each other, it is only what we expect; things are in their common way; and therefore they make no impression on the imagination: but when two distinct objects have a resemblance, we are struck, we attend to them, and we are pleased. The mind of man has naturally a far greater alacrity and satisfaction in tracing resemblances than in searching for differences: because by making resemblances we produce *new images;* we unite, we create, we enlarge our stock; but in making distinctions we offer no food at all to the imagination; the task itself is more severe and irksome, and what pleasure we derive from it is something of a negative and indirect

indirect nature. A piece of news is told me in the morning; this, merely as a piece of news, as a fact added to my stock, gives me some pleasure. In the evening I find there was nothing in it. What do I gain by this, but the dissatisfaction to find that I had been imposed upon? Hence it is that men are much more naturally inclined to belief than to incredulity. And it is upon this principle, that the most ignorant and barbarous nations have frequently excelled in similitudes, comparisons, metaphors, and allegories, who have been weak and backward in distinguishing and sorting their ideas. And it is for a reason of this kind, that Homer and the oriental writers, though very fond of similitudes, and though they often strike out such as are truly admirable, seldom take care to have them exact; that is, they are taken with the general resemblance, they paint it strongly, and they take no notice of the difference which may be found between the things compared.

Now, as the pleasure of resemblance is that which principally flatters the imagination, all men are nearly equal in this point, as far as their knowledge of the things represented or compared extends. The principle of this knowledge is very much accidental, as it depends upon experience and observation, and not on the strength or weakness of any natural faculty; and it is from this difference in knowledge, that what we commonly, though

though with no great exactness, call a difference in taste proceeds. A man to whom sculpture is new, sees a barber's block, or some ordinary piece of statuary; he is immediately struck and pleased, because he sees something like a human figure; and, entirely taken up with this likeness, he does not at all attend to its defects. No person, I believe, at the first time of seeing a piece of imitation ever did. Some time after, we suppose that this novice lights upon a more artificial work of the same nature; he now begins to look with contempt on what he admired at first; not that he admired it even then for its unlikeness to a man, but for that general though inaccurate resemblance which it bore to the human figure. What he admired at different times in these so different figures, is strictly the same; and though his knowledge is improved, his taste is not altered. Hitherto his mistake was from a want of knowledge in art, and this arose from his inexperience; but he may be still deficient from a want of knowledge in nature. For it is possible that the man in question may stop here, and that the master-piece of a great hand may please him no more than the middling performance of a vulgar artist; and this not for want of better or higher relish, but because all men do not observe with sufficient accuracy on the human figure to enable them to judge properly of an imitation of it. And that the critical taste does not depend

depend upon a superiour principle in men, but upon superiour knowledge, may appear from several instances. The story of the ancient painter and the shoemaker is very well known. The shoemaker set the painter right with regard to some mistakes he had made in the shoe of one of his figures, which the painter, who had not made such accurate observations on shoes, and was content with a general resemblance, had never observed. But this was no impeachment to the taste of the painter; it only shewed some want of knowledge in the art of making shoes. Let us imagine, that an anatomist had come into the painter's working-room. His piece is in general well done, the figure in question in a good attitude, and the parts well adjusted to their various movements; yet the anatomist, critical in his art, may observe the swell of some muscle not quite just in the peculiar action of the figure. Here the anatomist observes what the painter had not observed; and he passes by what the shoemaker had remarked. But a want of the last critical knowledge in anatomy no more reflected on the natural good taste of the painter, or of any common observer of his piece, than the want of an exact knowledge in the formation of a shoe. A fine piece of a decollated head of St. John the Baptist was shewn to a Turkish emperor; he praised many things, but he observed one defect; he observed that the skin did not

not shrink from the wounded part of the neck. The sultan on this occasion, though his observation was very just, discovered no more natural taste than the painter who executed this piece, or than a thousand European connoisseurs, who probably never would have made the same observation. His Turkish majesty had indeed been well acquainted with that terrible spectacle, which the others could only have represented in their imagination. On the subject of their dislike there is a difference between all these people, arising from the different kinds and degrees of their knowledge; but there is something in common to the painter, the shoemaker, the anatomist, and the Turkish emperor, the pleasure arising from a natural object, so far as each perceives it justly imitated; the satisfaction in seeing an agreeable figure; the sympathy proceeding from a striking and affecting incident. So far as taste is natural, it is nearly common to all.

In poetry, and other pieces of imagination, the same parity may be observed. It is true, that one man is charmed with Don Bellianis, and reads Virgil coldly: whilst another is transported with the Eneid, and leaves Don Bellianis to children. These two men seem to have a taste very different from each other; but in fact they differ very little. In both these pieces, which inspire such opposite sentiments, a tale exciting admiration is told; both

are full of action, both are passionate; in both are voyages, battles, triumphs, and continual changes of fortune. The admirer of Don Bellianis perhaps does not understand the refined language of the Eneid, who, if it was degraded into the style of the Pilgrim's Progress, might feel it in all its energy, on the same principle which made him an admirer of Don Bellianis.

In his favourite author he is not shocked with the continual breaches of probability, the confusion of times, the offences against manners, the trampling upon geography; for he knows nothing of geography and chronology, and he has never examined the grounds of probability. He perhaps reads of a shipwreck on the coast of Bohemia: wholly taken up with so interesting an event, and only solicitous for the fate of his hero, he is not in the least troubled at this extravagant blunder. For why should he be shocked at a shipwreck on the coast of Bohemia, who does not know but that Bohemia may be an island in the Atlantick ocean? and after all, what reflection is this on the natural good taste of the person here supposed?

So far then as taste belongs to the imagination, its principle is the same in all men; there is no difference in the manner of their being affected, nor in the causes of the affection; but in the *degree* there is a difference, which arises from two causes principally; either from a greater degree of

natural

natural sensibility, or from a closer and longer attention to the object. To illustrate this by the procedure of the senses, in which the same difference is found, let us suppose a very smooth marble table to be set before two men; they both perceive it to be smooth, and they are both pleased with it because of this quality. So far they agree. But suppose another, and after that another table, the latter still smoother than the former, to be set before them. It is now very probable that these men, who are so agreed upon what is smooth, and in the pleasure from thence, will disagree when they come to settle which table has the advantage in point of polish. Here is indeed the great difference between tastes, when men come to compare the excess or diminution of things which are judged by degree and not by measure. Nor is it easy, when such a difference arises, to settle the point, if the excess or diminution be not glaring. If we differ in opinion about two quantities, we can have recourse to a common measure, which may decide the question with the utmost exactness; and this, I take it, is what gives mathematical knowledge a greater certainty than any other. But in things whose excess is not judged by greater or smaller, as smoothness and roughness, hardness and softness, darkness and light, the shades of colours, all these are very easily distinguished when the difference is any way considerable, but not when it is minute,

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for want of some common measures, which perhaps may never come to be discovered. In these nice cases, supposing the acuteness of the sense equal, the greater attention and habit in such things will have the advantage. In the question about the tables, the marble-polisher will unquestionably determine the most accurately. But notwithstanding this want of a common measure for settling many disputes relative to the senses, and their representative the imagination, we find that the principles are the same in all, and that there is no disagreement until we come to examine into the pre-eminence or difference of things, which brings us within the province of the judgment.

So long as we are conversant with the sensible qualities of things, hardly any more than the imagination seems concerned; little more also than the imagination seems concerned when the passions are represented, because by the force of natural sympathy they are felt in all men without any recourse to reasoning, and their justness recognised in every breast. Love, grief, fear, anger, joy, all these passions have, in their turns affected every mind; and they do not affect it in an arbitrary or casual manner, but upon certain, natural, and uniform principles. But as many of the works of imagination are not confined to the representation of sensible objects, nor to efforts upon the passions, but extend themselves to the manners, the

the characters, the actions, and designs of men, their relations, their virtues and vices, they come within the province of the judgment, which is improved by attention, and by the habit of reasoning. All these make a very considerable part of what are considered as the objects of taste; and Horace sends us to the schools of philosophy and the world for our instruction in them. Whatever certainty is to be acquired in morality and the science of life; just the same degree of certainty have we in what relates to them in works of imitation. Indeed it is for the most part in our skill in manners, and in the observances of time and place, and of decency in general, which is only to be learned in those schools to which Horace recommends us, that what is called taste, by way of distinction, consists; and which is in reality no other than a more refined judgment. On the whole, it appears to me, that what is called taste, in its most general acceptation, is not a simple idea, but is partly made up of a perception of the primary pleasures of sense, of the secondary pleasures of the imagination, and of the conclusions of the reasoning faculty, concerning the various relations of these, and concerning the human passions, manners, and actions. All this is requisite to form taste, and the ground-work of all these is the same in the human mind; for as the senses are the great originals of all our ideas, and consequently of all our pleasures, if

if they are not uncertain and arbitrary, the whole ground-work of taste is common to all, and therefore there is a sufficient foundation for a conclusive reasoning on these matters.

Whilst we consider taste merely according to its nature and species, we shall find its principles entirely uniform; but the degree in which these principles prevail, in the several individuals of mankind, is altogether as different as the principles themselves are similar. For sensibility and judgment, which are the qualities that compose what we commonly call a *taste*, vary exceedingly in various people. From a defect in the former of these qualities arises a want of taste; a weakness in the latter constitutes a wrong or a bad one. There are some men formed with feelings so blunt, with tempers so cold and phlegmatick, that they can hardly be said to be awake during the whole course of their lives. Upon such persons the most striking objects make but a faint and obscure impression. There are others so continually in the agitation of gross and merely sensual pleasures, or so occupied in the low drudgery of avarice, or so heated in the chace of honours and distinction, that their minds, which had been used continually to the storms of these violent and tempestuous passions, can hardly be put in motion by the delicate and refined play of the imagination. These men, though from a different cause, become as stupid

and insensible as the former; but whenever either of these happen to be struck with any natural elegance or greatness, or with these qualities in any work of art, they are moved upon the same principle.

The cause of a wrong taste is a defect of judgment. And this may arise from a natural weakness of understanding (in whatever the strength of that faculty may consist), or, which is much more commonly the case, it may arise from a want of a proper and well-directed exercise, which alone can make it strong and ready. Besides that ignorance, inattention, prejudice, rashness, levity, obstinacy, in short, all those passions, and all those vices, which pervert the judgment in other matters, prejudice it no less in this its more refined and elegant province. These causes produce different opinions upon every thing which is an object of the understanding, without inducing us to suppose that there are no settled principles of reason. And indeed on the whole one may observe, that there is rather less difference upon matters of taste among mankind, than upon most of those which depend upon the naked reason; and that men are far better agreed on the excellence of a description in Virgil, than on the truth or falsehood of a theory of Aristotle.

A rectitude of judgment in the arts, which may be called a good taste, does in a great measure

depend

depend upon sensibility; because if the mind has no bent to the pleasures of the imagination, it will never apply itself sufficiently to works of that species to acquire a competent knowledge in them. But, though a degree of sensibility is requisite to form a good judgment, yet a good judgment does not necessarily arise from a quick sensibility of pleasure; it frequently happens that a very poor judge, merely by force of a greater complexional sensibility, is more affected by a very poor piece, than the best judge by the most perfect; for as every thing new, extraordinary, grand, or passionate, is well calculated to affect such a person, and that the faults do not affect him, his pleasure is more pure and unmixed; and as it is merely a pleasure of the imagination, it is much higher than any which is derived from a rectitude of the judgment; the judgment is for the greater part employed in throwing stumbling-blocks in the way of the imagination, in dissipating the scenes of its enchantment, and in tying us down to the disagreeable yoke of our reason: for almost the only pleasure that men have in judging better than others, consists in a sort of conscious pride and superiority, which arises from thinking rightly; but then, this is an indirect pleasure, a pleasure which does not immediately result from the object which is under contemplation. In the morning of our days, when the senses are unworn and tender, when the whole man is awake in every part, and the gloss of

novelty fresh upon all the objects that surround us, how lively at that time are our sensations, but how false and inaccurate the judgments we form of things! I despair of ever receiving the same degree of pleasure from the most excellent performances of genius, which I felt at that age from pieces which my present judgment regards as trifling and contemptible. Every trivial cause of pleasure is apt to affect the man of too sanguine a complexion: his appetite is too keen to suffer his taste to be delicate; and he is in all respects what Ovid says of himself in love,

Molle meum levibus cor est violabile telis,
Et semper causa est, cur ego semper amem.

One of this character can never be a refined judge; never what the comick poet calls *elegans formarum spectator*. The excellence and force of a composition must always be imperfectly estimated from its effects on the minds of any, except we know the temper and character of those minds. The most powerful effects of poetry and musick have been displayed, and perhaps are still displayed, where these arts are but in a very low and imperfect state. The rude hearer is affected by the principles which operate in these arts even in their rudest condition; and he is not skilful enough to perceive the defects. But as the arts advance towards their perfection, the science of criticism advances with equal pace, and the pleasure of judges is frequently interrupted

interrupted by the faults which are discovered in the most finished compositions.

Before I leave this subject, I cannot help taking notice of an opinion which many persons entertain, as if the taste were a separate faculty of the mind, and distinct from the judgment and imagination; a species of instinct, by which we are struck naturally, and at the first glance, without any previous reasoning, with the excellencies, or the defects, of a composition. So far as the imagination and the passions are concerned, I believe it true, that the reason is little consulted; but where disposition, where decorum, where congruity are concerned, in short, wherever the best taste differs from the worst, I am convinced that the understanding operates, and nothing else; and its operation is in reality far from being always sudden, or, when it is sudden, it is often far from being right. Men of the best taste, by consideration come frequently to change these early and precipitate judgments, which the mind, from its aversion to neutrality and doubt, loves to form on the spot. It is known that the taste (whatever it is) is improved exactly as we improve our judgment, by extending our knowledge, by a steady attention to our object, and by frequent exercise. They who have not taken these methods, if their taste decides quickly, it is always uncertainly; and their quickness is owing to their presumption and rashness, and not to any sudden irradiation, that in

a moment dispels all darkness from their minds. But they who have cultivated that species of knowledge which makes the object of taste, by degrees, and habitually attain not only a soundness, but a readiness of judgment, as men do by the same methods on all other occasions. At first they are obliged to spell, but at last they read with ease and with celerity; but this celerity of its operation is no proof, that the taste is a distinct faculty. Nobody, I believe, has attended the course of a discussion, which turned upon matters within the sphere of mere naked reason, but must have observed the extreme readiness with which the whole process of the argument is carried on, the grounds discovered, the objections raised and answered, and the conclusions drawn from premises, with a quickness altogether as great as the taste can be supposed to work with; and yet where nothing but plain reason either is or can be suspected to operate. To multiply principles for every different appearance, is useless, and unphilosophical too in a high degree.

This matter might be pursued much farther; but it is not the extent of the subject which must prescribe our bounds, for what subject does not branch out to infinity? It is the nature of our particular scheme, and the single point of view in which we consider it, which ought to put a stop to our researches.

A PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE

ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS

OF THE

SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL.

PART I.

SECTION I.

NOVELTY.

THE first and the simplest emotion which we discover in the human mind, is Curiosity. By curiosity, I mean whatever desire we have for, or whatever pleasure we take in, novelty. We see children perpetually running from place to place, to hunt out something new: they catch with great eagerness, and with very little choice, at whatever comes before them; their attention is engaged by every thing, because every thing has, in that stage of life, the charm of novelty to recommend it. But as those things, which engage

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us merely by their novelty, cannot attach us for any length of time, curiosity is the most superficial of all the affections; it changes its object perpetually; it has an appetite which is very sharp, but very easily satisfied; and it has always an appearance of giddiness, restlessness, and anxiety. Curiosity, from its nature, is a very active principle; it quickly runs over the greatest part of its objects, and soon exhausts the variety which is commonly to be met with in nature; the same things make frequent returns, and they return with less and less of any agreeable effect. In short, the occurrences of life, by the time we come to know it a little, would be incapable of affecting the mind with any other sensations than those of loathing and weariness, if many things were not adapted to affect the mind by means of other powers besides novelty in them, and of other passions besides curiosity in ourselves. These powers and passions shall be considered in their place. But whatever these powers are, or upon what principle soever they affect the mind, it is absolutely necessary that they should not be exerted in those things which a daily and vulgar use have brought into a stale unaffecting familiarity. Some degree of novelty must be one of the materials in every instrument which works upon the mind; and curiosity blends itself more or less with all our passions.

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SECT. II.

PAIN AND PLEASURE.

IT seems then necessary towards moving the passions of people advanced in life to any considerable degree, that the objects designed for that purpose, besides their being in some measure new, should be capable of exciting pain or pleasure from other causes. Pain and pleasure are simple ideas, incapable of definition. People are not liable to be mistaken in their feelings, but they are very frequently wrong in the names they give them, and in their reasonings about them. Many are of opinion, that pain arises necessarily from the removal of some pleasure; as they think pleasure does from the ceasing or diminution of some pain. For my part, I am rather inclined to imagine, that pain and pleasure, in their most simple and natural manner of affecting, are each of a positive nature, and by no means necessarily dependent on each other for their existence. The human mind is often, and I think it is for the most part, in a state neither of pain nor pleasure, which I call a state of indifference. When I am carried from this state into a state of actual pleasure, it does not appear necessary that I should pass through the medium of any sort of pain. If in such a state of indifference, or ease, or tranquillity, or call it what you

you please, you were to be suddenly entertained with a concert of musick; or suppose some object of a fine shape, and bright, lively colours, to be presented before you; or imagine your smell is gratified with the fragrance of a rose; or if without any previous thirst you were to drink of some pleasant kind of wine, or to taste of some sweetmeat without being hungry; in all the several senses, of hearing, smelling, and tasting, you undoubtedly find a pleasure; yet if I enquire into the state of your mind previous to these gratifications, you will hardly tell me that they found you in any kind of pain; or, having satisfied these several senses with their several pleasures, will you say that any pain has succeeded, though the pleasure is absolutely over? Suppose, on the other hand, a man in the same state of indifference, to receive a violent blow, or to drink of some bitter potion, or to have his ears wounded with some harsh and grating sound; here is no removal of pleasure; and yet here is felt in every sense which is affected, a pain very distinguishable. It may be said, perhaps, that the pain in these cases had its rise from the removal of the pleasure which the man enjoyed before, though that pleasure was of so low a degree as to be perceived only by the removal. But this seems to me a subtilty, that is not discoverable in nature. For if, previous to the pain, I do not feel any actual pleasure, I have

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no reason to judge that any such thing exists; since pleasure is only pleasure as it is felt. The same may be said of pain, and with equal reason. I can never persuade myself that pleasure and pain are mere relations, which can only exist as they are contrasted; but I think I can discern clearly that there are positive pains and pleasures, which do not at all depend upon each other. Nothing is more certain to my own feelings than this. There is nothing which I can distinguish in my mind with more clearness than the three states, of indifference, of pleasure, and of pain. Every one of these I can perceive without any sort of idea of its relation to any thing else. Caius is afflicted with a fit of the cholick; this man is actually in pain; stretch Caius upon the rack, he will feel a much greater pain: but does this pain of the rack arise from the removal of any pleasure? or is the fit of the cholick a pleasure or a pain just as we are pleased to consider it?

SECT. III.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE REMOVAL OF PAIN, AND POSITIVE PLEASURE.

WE shall carry this proposition yet a step farther. We shall venture to propose, that pain and pleasure are not only not necessarily dependent

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for their existence on their mutual diminution or removal, but that, in reality, the diminution or ceasing of pleasure does not operate like positive pain; and that the removal or diminution of pain, in its effect, has very little resemblance to positive pleasure*. The former of these propositions will, I believe, be much more readily allowed than the latter; because it is very evident that pleasure, when it has run its career, sets us down very nearly where it found us. Pleasure of every kind quickly satisfies; and, when it is over, we relapse into indifference, or rather we fall into a soft tranquillity, which is tinged with the agreeable colour of the former sensation. I own it is not at first view so apparent, that the removal of a great pain does not resemble positive pleasure; but let us recollect in what state we have found our minds upon escaping some imminent danger, or on being released from the severity of some cruel pain. We have on such occasions found, if I am not much mistaken, the temper of our minds in a tenour very remote from that which attends the presence of positive pleasure; we have found them in a state of much sobriety, impressed with a sense of awe, in

* Mr. Locke [Essay on Human Understanding, l. ii. c. 20, sect. 16.] thinks that the removal or lessening of a pain is considered and operates as a pleasure, and the loss or diminishing of pleasure as a pain. It is this opinion which we consider here.

in a sort of tranquillity shadowed with horrour. The fashion of the countenance and the gesture of the body on such occasions is so correspondent to this state of mind, that any person, a stranger to the cause of the appearance, would rather judge us under some consternation, than in the enjoyment of any thing like positive pleasure.

> Ὡς δ' ὅταν ἄνδρ' ἄτη πυκινὴ λάβῃ, ὅς τ' ἐνὶ πάτρῃ
> Φῶτα κατακτείνας, ἄλλων ἐξίκετο δῆμον,
> Ἀνδρὸς ἐς ἀφνειοῦ, θάμβος δ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντας.
>
> Iliad. Ω. 480.

As when a wretch, who, conscious of his crime,
Pursued for murder from his native clime,
Just gains some frontier, breathless, pale, amaz'd;
All gaze, all wonder!

This striking appearance of the man whom Homer supposes to have just escaped an imminent danger, the sort of mixed passion of terrour and surprise, with which he affects the spectators, paints very strongly the manner in which we find ourselves affected upon occasions any way similar. For when we have suffered from any violent emotion, the mind naturally continues in something like the same condition, after the cause which first produced it has ceased to operate. The tossing of the sea remains after the storm; and when this remain of horrour has entirely subsided, all the passion, which the accident raised, subsides along with

with it; and the mind returns to its usual state of indifference. In short, pleasure (I mean any thing either in the inward sensation, or in the outward appearance, like pleasure from a positive cause) has never, I imagine, its origin from the removal of pain or danger.

SECT. IV.

OF DELIGHT AND PLEASURE, AS OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER.

BUT shall we therefore say, that the removal of pain or its diminution is always simply painful? or affirm that the cessation or the lessening of pleasure is always attended itself with a pleasure? By no means. What I advance is no more than this; first, that there are pleasures and pains of a positive and independent nature; and, secondly, that the feeling which results from the ceasing or diminution of pain does not bear a sufficient resemblance to positive pleasure, to have it considered as of the same nature, or to entitle it to be known by the same name; and, thirdly, that upon the same principle the removal or qualification of pleasure has no resemblance to positive pain. It is certain that the former feeling (the removal or moderation of pain) has something in it far from distressing, or disagreeable in its nature. This feeling, in many cases so agreeable, but in all so different from

from positive pleasure, has no name which I know; but that hinders not its being a very real one, and very different from all others. It is most certain, that every species of satisfaction or pleasure, how different soever in its manner of affecting, is of a positive nature in the mind of him who feels it. The affection is undoubtedly positive; but the cause may be, as in this case it certainly is, a sort of *Privation*. And it is very reasonable that we should distinguish by some term two things so distinct in nature, as a pleasure that is such simply, and without any relation, from that pleasure which cannot exist without a relation, and that too a relation to pain. Very extraordinary it would be, if these affections, so distinguishable in their causes, so different in their effects, should be confounded with each other, because vulgar use has ranged them under the same general title. Whenever I have occasion to speak of this species of relative pleasure, I call it *Delight;* and I shall take the best care I can, to use that word in no other sense. I am satisfied the word is not commonly used in this appropriated signification; but I thought it better to take up a word already known, and to limit its signification, than to introduce a new one, which would not perhaps incorporate so well with the language. I should never have presumed the least alteration in our words, if the nature of the language, framed for the purposes of business

 rather

rather than those of philosophy, and the nature of my subject, that leads me out of the common track of discourse, did not in a manner necessitate me to it. I shall make use of this liberty with all possible caution. As I make use of the word *Delight* to express the sensation which accompanies the removal of pain or danger; so when I speak of positive pleasure, I shall for the most part call it simply *Pleasure*.

SECT. V.

JOY AND GRIEF.

IT must be observed, that the cessation of pleasure affects the mind three ways. If it simply ceases, after having continued a proper time, the effect is *indifference*; if it be abruptly broken off, there ensues an uneasy sense called *disappointment*; if the object be so totally lost that there is no chance of enjoying it again, a passion arises in the mind, which is called *grief*. Now there is none of these, not even grief, which is the most violent, that I think has any resemblance to positive pain. The person who grieves, suffers his passions to grow upon him; he indulges it, he loves it: but this never happens in the case of actual pain, which no man ever willingly endured for any considerable time. That grief should be willingly endured, though far from a simply pleasing sensation, is not

so

so difficult to be understood. It is the nature of grief to keep its object perpetually in its eye, to present it in its most pleasurable views, to repeat all the circumstances that attend it, even to the last minuteness; to go back to every particular enjoyment, to dwell upon each, and to find a thousand new perfections in all, that were not sufficiently understood before; in grief, the *pleasure* is still uppermost; and the affliction we suffer has no resemblance to absolute pain, which is always odious, and which we endeavour to shake off as soon as possible. The Odyssey of Homer, which abounds with so many natural and affecting images, has none more striking than those which Menelaus raises of the calamitous fate of his friends, and his own manner of feeling it. He owns, indeed, that he often gives himself some intermission from such melancholy reflections; but he observes, too, that, melancholy as they are, they give him pleasure.

> Αλλ' ἔμπης πάντας μὲν ὀδυρόμενος καὶ ἀχεύων,
> Πολλάκις ἐν μεγάροισι καθήμενος ἡμετέροισιν,
> Αλλοτε μέν τε γόῳ φρένα τέρπομαι, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
> Παύομαι· αἰψηρὸς δε κόρος κρυεροῖο γόοιο.
>
> Hom. Od. Δ. 100.

> *Still in short intervals of* pleasing woe,
> *Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,*
> *I to the glorious dead, for ever dear,*
> Indulge *the tribute of a* grateful *tear.*

 On

On the other hand, when we recover our health, when we escape an imminent danger, is it with joy that we are affected? The sense on these occasions is far from that smooth and voluptuous satisfaction which the assured prospect of pleasure bestows. The delight which arises from the modifications of pain confesses the stock from whence it sprung, in its solid, strong, and severe nature.

SECT. VI.

OF THE PASSIONS WHICH BELONG TO SELF-PRESERVATION.

MOST of the ideas which are capable of making a powerful impression on the mind, whether simply of Pain or Pleasure, or of the modifications of those, may be reduced very nearly to these two heads, *self-preservation* and *society*; to the ends of one or the other of which all our passions are calculated to answer. The passions which concern self-preservation, turn mostly on *pain* or *danger*. The ideas of *pain*, *sickness* and *death*, fill the mind with strong emotions of horrour; but *life* and *health*, though they put us in a capacity of being affected with pleasure, make no such impression by the simple enjoyment. The passions therefore which are conversant about the preservation of the individual turn chiefly on *pain* and *danger*, and they are the most powerful of all the passions.

SECT. VII.

OF THE SUBLIME.

WHATEVER is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terrour, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. I say the strongest emotion, because I am satisfied the ideas of pain are much more powerful than those which enter on the part of pleasure. Without all doubt, the torments which we may be made to suffer are much greater in their effect on the body and mind, than any pleasures which the most learned voluptuary could suggest, or than the liveliest imagination, and the most sound and exquisitely sensible body, could enjoy. Nay, I am in great doubt whether any man could be found, who would earn a life of the most perfect satisfaction, at the price of ending it in the torments, which justice inflicted in a few hours on the late unfortunate regicide in France. But as pain is stronger in its operation than pleasure, so death is in general a much more affecting idea than pain; because there are very few pains, however exquisite, which are not preferred to death: nay, what generally makes

pain itself, if I may say so, more painful, is, that it is considered as an emissary of this king of terrours. When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience. The cause of this I shall endeavour to investigate hereafter.

SECT. VIII.

OF THE PASSIONS WHICH BELONG TO SOCIETY.

THE other head under which I class our passions, is that of *society*, which may be divided into two sorts. 1. The society of the *sexes*, which answers the purpose of propagation; and next, that more *general society*, which we have with men and with other animals, and which we may in some sort be said to have even with the inanimate world. The passions belonging to the preservation of the individual turn wholly on pain and danger: those which belong to *generation* have their origin in gratifications and *pleasures;* the pleasure most directly belonging to this purpose is of a lively character, rapturous and violent, and confessedly the highest pleasure of sense; yet the absence of this so great an enjoyment scarce amounts to an uneasiness; and, except at particular times, I do not think it affects at all. When men describe in

what manner they are affected by pain and danger, they do not dwell on the pleasure of health and the comfort of security, and then lament the *loss* of these satisfactions: the whole turns upon the actual pains and horrours which they endure. But if you listen to the complaints of a forsaken lover, you observe that he insists largely on the pleasures which he enjoyed, or hoped to enjoy, and on the perfection of the object of his desires; it is the *loss* which is always uppermost in his mind. The violent effects produced by love, which has sometimes been even wrought up to madness, is no objection to the rule which we seek to establish. When men have suffered their imaginations to be long affected with any idea, it so wholly engrosses them as to shut out by degrees almost every other, and to break down every partition of the mind which would confine it. Any idea is sufficient for the purpose, as is evident from the infinite variety of causes, which give rise to madness: but this at most can only prove, that the passion of love is capable of producing very extraordinary effects, not that its extraordinary emotions have any connexion with positive pain.

SECT. IX.

THE FINAL CAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PASSIONS BELONGING TO SELF-PRESERVATION, AND THOSE WHICH REGARD THE SOCIETY OF THE SEXES.

THE final cause of the difference in character between the passions which regard self-preservation, and those which are directed to the multiplication of the species, will illustrate the foregoing remarks yet further; and it is, I imagine, worthy of observation even upon its own account. As the performance of our duties of every kind depends upon life, and the performing them with vigour and efficacy depends upon health, we are very strongly affected with whatever threatens the destruction of either: but as we were not made to acquiesce in life and health, the simple enjoyment of them is not attended with any real pleasure, lest, satisfied with that, we should give ourselves over to indolence and inaction. On the other hand, the generation of mankind is a great purpose, and it is requisite that men should be animated to the pursuit of it by some great incentive. It is therefore attended with a very high pleasure; but as it is by no means designed to be our constant business, it is not fit that the absence of this pleasure should be attended with any considerable

pain.

pain. The difference between men and brutes, in this point, seems to be remarkable. Men are at all times pretty equally disposed to the pleasures of love; because they are to be guided by reason in the time and manner of indulging them. Had any great pain arisen from the want of this satisfaction, reason, I am afraid, would find great difficulties in the performance of its office. But brutes, that obey laws, in the execution of which their own reason has but little share, have their stated seasons; at such times it is not improbable that the sensation from the want is very troublesome, because the end must be then answered, or be missed in many, perhaps for ever; as the inclination returns only with its season.

SECT. X.

OF BEAUTY.

THE passion which belongs to generation, merely as such, is lust only. This is evident in brutes, whose passions are more unmixed, and which pursue their purposes more directly than ours. The only distinction they observe with regard to their mates, is that of sex. It is true, that they stick severally to their own species in preference to all others. But this preference, I imagine, does not arise from any sense of beauty which they find in their species, as Mr. Addison supposes, but from a

law

law of some other kind, to which they are subject; and this we may fairly conclude, from their apparent want of choice amongst those objects to which the barriers of their species have confined them. But man, who is a creature adapted to a greater variety and intricacy of relation, connects with the general passion the idea of some *social* qualities, which direct and heighten the appetite which he has in common with all other animals; and as he is not designed like them to live at large, it is fit that he should have something to create a preference, and fix his choice; and this in general should be some sensible quality; as no other can so quickly, so powerfully, or so surely produce its effect. The object therefore of this mixed passion, which we call love, is the *beauty* of the *sex*. Men are carried to the sex in general, as it is the sex, and by the common law of nature; but they are attached to particulars by personal *beauty*. I call beauty a social quality; for where women and men, and not only they, but when other animals give us a sense of joy and pleasure in beholding them (and there are many that do so) they inspire us with sentiments of tenderness and affection towards their persons; we like to have them near us, and we enter willingly into a kind of relation with them, unless we should have strong reasons to the contrary. But to what end, in many cases, this was designed, I am unable to discover; for I see no

greater

greater reason for a connexion between man and several animals who are attired in so engaging a manner, than between him and some others who entirely want this attraction, or possess it in a far weaker degree. But it is probable, that Providence did not make even this distinction, but with a view to some great end; though we cannot perceive distinctly what it is, as his wisdom is not our wisdom, nor our ways his ways.

SECT. XI.

SOCIETY AND SOLITUDE.

THE second branch of the social passions is that which administers to *society in general*. With regard to this, I observe, that society, merely as society, without any particular heightenings, gives us no positive pleasure in the enjoyment; but absolute and entire *solitude*, that is, the total and perpetual exclusion from all society, is as great a positive pain as can almost be conceived. Therefore in the balance between the pleasure of general *society*, and the pain of absolute solitude, *pain* is the predominant idea. But the pleasure of any particular social enjoyment outweighs very considerably the uneasiness caused by the want of that particular enjoyment; so that the strongest sensations relative to the habitudes of *particular society* are sensations of pleasure. Good company, lively

conversations, and the endearments of friendship, fill the mind with great pleasure; a temporary solitude, on the other hand, is itself agreeable. This may perhaps prove that we are creatures designed for contemplation as well as action; since solitude as well as society has its pleasures; as from the former observation we may discern, that an entire life of solitude contradicts the purposes of our being, since death itself is scarcely an idea of more terrour.

SECT. XII.

SYMPATHY, IMITATION, AND AMBITION.

UNDER this denomination of society, the passions are of a complicated kind, and branch out into a variety of forms, agreeably to that variety of ends they are to serve in the great chain of society. The three principal links in this chain are *sympathy*, *imitation*, and *ambition*.

SECT. XIII.

SYMPATHY.

IT is by the first of these passions that we enter into the concerns of others; that we are moved as they are moved, and are never suffered to be indifferent spectators of almost any thing which men can do or suffer. For sympathy must be considered

as a sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected: so that this passion may either partake of the nature of those which regard self-preservation, and turning upon pain may be a source of the sublime; or it may turn upon ideas of pleasure; and then whatever has been said of the social affections, whether they regard society in general, or only some particular modes of it, may be applicable here. It is by this principle chiefly that poetry, painting, and other affecting arts, transfuse their passions from one breast to another, and are often capable of grafting a delight on wretchedness, misery, and death itself. It is a common observation, that objects which in the reality would shock, are in tragical, and such like representations, the source of a very high species of pleasure. This, taken as a fact, has been the cause of much reasoning. The satisfaction has been commonly attributed, first, to the comfort we receive in considering that so melancholy a story is no more than a fiction; and, next, to the contemplation of our own freedom from the evils which we see represented. I am afraid it is a practice much too common in enquiries of this nature, to attribute the cause of feelings which merely arise from the mechanical structure of our bodies, or from the natural frame and constitution of our minds, to certain conclusions of the reasoning

faculty

faculty on the objects presented to us; for I should imagine, that the influence of reason in producing our passions is nothing near so extensive as it is commonly believed.

SECT. XIV.

THE EFFECTS OF SYMPATHY IN THE DISTRESSES OF OTHERS.

TO examine this point concerning the effect of tragedy in a proper manner, we must previously consider how we are affected by the feelings of our fellow-creatures in circumstances of real distress. I am convinced we have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others; for let the affection be what it will in appearance, if it does not make us shun such objects, if on the contrary it induces us to approach them, if it makes us dwell upon them, in this case I conceive we must have a delight or pleasure of some species or other in contemplating objects of this kind. Do we not read the authentick histories of scenes of this nature with as much pleasure as romances or poems, where the incidents are fictitious? The prosperity of no empire, nor the grandeur of no king, can so agreeably affect in the reading, as the ruin of the state of Macedon, and the distress of its unhappy prince. Such a catastrophe touches us in history as much as the destruction

destruction of Troy does in fable. Our delight, in cases of this kind, is very greatly heightened, if the sufferer be some excellent person who sinks under an unworthy fortune. Scipio and Cato are both virtuous characters; but we are more deeply affected by the violent death of the one, and the ruin of the great cause he adhered to, than with the deserved triumphs and uninterrupted prosperity of the other: for terror is a passion which always produces delight when it does not press too closely; and pity is a passion accompanied with pleasure, because it arises from love and social affection. Whenever we are formed by nature to any active purpose, the passion which animates us to it is attended with delight, or a pleasure of some kind, let the subject-matter be what it will; and as our Creator has designed that we should be united by the bond of sympathy, he has strengthened that bond by a proportionable delight; and there most where our sympathy is most wanted,—in the distresses of others. If this passion was simply painful, we would shun with the greatest care all persons and places that could excite such a passion; as some, who are so far gone in indolence as not to endure any strong impression, actually do. But the case is widely different with the greater part of mankind; there is no spectacle we so eagerly pursue, as that of some uncommon and grievous calamity; so that whether the misfortune is before our eyes,

or

or whether they are turned back to it in history, it always touches with delight. This is not an unmixed delight, but blended with no small uneasiness. The delight we have in such things hinders us from shunning scenes of misery; and the pain we feel prompts us to relieve ourselves in relieving those who suffer; and all this antecedent to any reasoning, by an instinct that works us to its own purposes without our concurrence.

SECT. XV.

OF THE EFFECTS OF TRAGEDY.

IT is thus in real calamities. In imitated distresses the only difference is the pleasure resulting from the effects of imitation; for it is never so perfect, but we can perceive it is imitation, and on that principle are somewhat pleased with it. And indeed in some cases we derive as much or more pleasure from that source than from the thing itself. But then I imagine we shall be much mistaken if we attribute any considerable part of our satisfaction in tragedy to the consideration that tragedy is a deceit, and its representations no realities. The nearer it approaches the reality, and the further it removes us from all idea of fiction, the more perfect is its power. But be its power of what kind it will, it never approaches to what it represents. Choose a day on which to represent the

the most sublime and affecting tragedy we have; appoint the most favourite actors; spare no cost upon the scenes and decorations; unite the greatest efforts of poetry, painting, and musick; and when you have collected your audience, just at the moment when their minds are erect with expectation, let it be reported that a state criminal of high rank is on the point of being executed in the adjoining square; in a moment the emptiness of the theatre would demonstrate the comparative weakness of the imitative arts, and proclaim the triumph of the real sympathy. I believe that this notion of our having a simple pain in the reality, yet a delight in the representation, arises from hence, that we do not sufficiently distinguish what we would by no means choose to do, from what we should be eager enough to see if it was once done. We delight in seeing things, which so far from doing, our heartiest wishes would be to see redressed. This noble capital, the pride of England and of Europe, I believe no man is so strangely wicked as to desire to see destroyed by a conflagration or an earthquake, though he should be removed himself to the greatest distance from the danger. But suppose such a fatal accident to have happened, what numbers from all parts would crowd to behold the ruins, and amongst them many who would have been content never to have seen London in its glory! Nor is it, either in real or fictitious dis-

tresses, our immunity from them which produces our delight; in my own mind I can discover nothing like it. I apprehend that this mistake is owing to a sort of sophism, by which we are frequently imposed upon; it arises from our not distinguishing between what is indeed a necessary condition to our doing or suffering any thing in general, and what is the *cause* of some particular act. If a man kills me with a sword, it is a necessary condition to this that we should have been both of us alive before the fact; and yet it would be absurd to say, that our being both living creatures was the cause of his crime and of my death. So it is certain, that it is absolutely necessary my life should be out of any imminent hazard, before I can take a delight in the sufferings of others, real or imaginary, or indeed in any thing else from any cause whatsoever. But then it is a sophism to argue from thence, that this immunity is the cause of my delight either on these or on any occasions. No one can distinguish such a cause of satisfaction in his own mind, I believe; nay, when we do not suffer any very acute pain, nor are exposed to any imminent danger of our lives, we can feel for others, whilst we suffer ourselves; and often then most when we are softened by affliction; we see with pity even distresses which we would accept in the place of our own.

SECT. XVI.

IMITATION.

THE second passion belonging to society is imitation, or, if you will, a desire of imitating, and consequently a pleasure in it. This passion arises from much the same cause with sympathy. For as sympathy makes us take a concern in whatever men feel, so this affection prompts us to copy whatever they do; and consequently we have a pleasure in imitating, and in whatever belongs to imitation merely as it is such, without any intervention of the reasoning faculty, but solely from our natural constitution, which Providence has framed in such a manner as to find either pleasure or delight, according to the nature of the object, in whatever regards the purposes of our being. It is by imitation far more than by precept, that we learn every thing; and what we learn thus, we acquire not only more effectually, but more pleasantly. This forms our manners, our opinions, our lives. It is one of the strongest links of society; it is a species of mutual compliance, which all men yield to each other, without constraint to themselves, and which is extremely flattering to all. Herein it is that painting and many other agreeable arts have laid one of the principal foundations of their power. And since, by its influence on

our manners and our passions, it is of such great consequence, I shall here venture to lay down a rule, which may inform us with a good degree of certainty when we are to attribute the power of the arts to imitation, or to our pleasure in the skill of the imitator merely, and when to sympathy, or some other cause in conjunction with it. When the object represented in poetry or painting is such as we could have no desire of seeing in the reality, then I may be sure that its power in poetry or painting is owing to the power of imitation, and to no cause operating in the thing itself. So it is with most of the pieces which the painters call still-life. In these a cottage, a dunghill, the meanest and most ordinary utensils of the kitchen, are capable of giving us pleasure. But when the object of the painting or poem is such as we should run to see if real, let it affect us with what odd sort of sense it will, we may rely upon it, that the power of the poem or picture is more owing to the nature of the thing itself than to the mere effect of imitation, or to a consideration of the skill of the imitator, however excellent. Aristotle has spoken so much and so solidly upon the force of imitation in his Poeticks, that it makes any further discourse upon this subject the less necessary.

SECT. XVII.

AMBITION.

ALTHOUGH imitation is one of the great instruments used by Providence in bringing our nature towards its perfection, yet if men gave themselves up to imitation entirely, and each followed the other, and so on in an eternal circle, it is easy to see that there never could be any improvement amongst them. Men must remain as brutes do, the same at the end that they are at this day, and that they were in the beginning of the world. To prevent this, God has planted in man a sense of ambition, and a satisfaction arising from the contemplation of his excelling his fellows in something deemed valuable amongst them. It is this passion that drives men to all the ways we see in use of signalizing themselves, and that tends to make whatever excites in a man the idea of this distinction so very pleasant. It has been so strong as to make very miserable men take comfort, that they were supreme in misery; and certain it is, that, where we cannot distinguish ourselves by something excellent, we begin to take a complacency in some singular infirmities, follies, or defects of one kind or other. It is on this principle that flattery is so prevalent; for flattery is no more than what raises in a man's mind an idea of a preference which he

has not. Now, whatever, either on good or upon bad grounds, tends to raise a man in his own opinion, produces a sort of swelling and triumph, that is extremely grateful to the human mind; and this swelling is never more perceived, nor operates with more force, than when without danger we are conversant with terrible objects; the mind always claiming to itself some part of the dignity and importance of the things which it contemplates. Hence proceeds what Longinus has observed of that glorying and sense of inward greatness, that always fills the reader of such passages in poets and orators as are sublime; it is what every man must have felt in himself upon such occasions.

SECT. XVIII.

THE RECAPITULATION.

TO draw the whole of what has been said into a few distinct points:—The passions which belong to self-preservation turn on pain and danger; they are simply painful when their causes immediately affect us; they are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances; this delight I have not called pleasure, because it turns on pain, and because it is different enough from any idea of positive pleasure. Whatever excites this delight, I

call *sublime*. The passions belonging to self-preservation are the strongest of all the passions.

The second head to which the passions are referred with relation to their final cause, is society. There are two sorts of societies. The first is, the society of sex. The passion belonging to this is called love, and it contains a mixture of lust; its object is the beauty of women. The other is the great society with man and all other animals. The passion subservient to this is called likewise love, but it has no mixture of lust, and its object is beauty; which is a name I shall apply to all such qualities in things as induce in us a sense of affection and tenderness, or some other passion the most nearly resembling these. The passion of love has its rise in positive pleasure; it is, like all things which grow out of pleasure, capable of being mixed with a mode of uneasiness, that is, when an idea of its object is excited in the mind with an idea at the same time of having irretrievably lost it. This mixed sense of pleasure I have not called *pain*, because it turns upon actual pleasure, and because it is, both in its cause and in most of its effects, of a nature altogether different.

Next to the general passion we have for society, to a choice in which we are directed by the pleasure we have in the object, the particular passion under this head called sympathy has the greatest extent. The nature of this passion is, to put us in

the place of another in whatever circumstance he is in, and to affect us in a like manner; so that this passion may, as the occasion requires, turn either on pain or pleasure; but with the modifications mentioned in some cases in sect. 11. As to imitation and preference, nothing more need be said.

SECT. XIX.

THE CONCLUSION.

I BELIEVED that an attempt to range and methodize some of our most leading passions would be a good preparative to such an enquiry as we are going to make in the ensuing discourse. The passions I have mentioned are almost the only ones which it can be necessary to consider in our present design; though the variety of the passions is great, and worthy, in every branch of that variety, of an attentive investigation. The more accurately we search into the human mind, the stronger traces we every where find of His wisdom who made it. If a discourse on the use of the parts of the body may be considered as an hymn to the Creator; the use of the passions, which are the organs of the mind, cannot be barren of praise to Him, nor unproductive to ourselves of that noble and uncommon union of science and admiration, which a contemplation of the works of infinite

wisdom

wisdom alone can afford to a rational mind: whilst, referring to him whatever we find of right or good or fair in ourselves, discovering his strength and wisdom even in our own weakness and imperfection, honouring them where we discover them clearly, and adoring their profundity where we are lost in our search, we may be inquisitive without impertinence, and elevated without pride; we may be admitted, if I may dare to say so, into the counsels of the Almighty by a consideration of his works. The elevation of the mind ought to be the principal end of all our studies; which if they do not in some measure effect, they are of very little service to us. But, besides this great purpose, a consideration of the rationale of our passions seems to me very necessary for all who would affect them upon solid and sure principles. It is not enough to know them in general: to affect them after a delicate manner, or to judge properly of any work designed to affect them, we should know the exact boundaries of their several jurisdictions; we should pursue them through all their variety of operations, and pierce into the inmost, and what might appear inaccessible parts of our nature,

Quod latet arcanâ non enarrabile fibrâ

Without all this it is possible for a man, after a confused manner, sometimes to satisfy his own mind of the truth of his work; but he can never have

have a certain determinate rule to go by, nor can he ever make his propositions sufficiently clear to others. Poets, and orators, and painters, and those who cultivate other branches of the liberal arts, have, without this critical knowledge, succeeded well in their several provinces, and will succeed: as among artificers there are many machines made and even invented without any exact knowledge of the principles they are governed by. It is, I own, not uncommon to be wrong in theory, and right in practice; and we are happy that it is so. Men often act right from their feelings, who afterwards reason but ill on them from principle: but as it is impossible to avoid an attempt at such reasoning, and equally impossible to prevent its having some influence on our practice, surely it is worth taking some pains to have it just, and founded on the basis of sure experience. We might expect that the artists themselves would have been our surest guides; but the artists have been too much occupied in the practice: the philosophers have done little; and what they have done, was mostly with a view to their own schemes and systems: and as for those called criticks, they have generally sought the rule of the arts in the wrong place; they sought it among poems, pictures, engravings, statues, and buildings. But art can never give the rules that make an art. This is, I believe, the reason why artists in general, and poets

principally,

principally, have been confined in so narrow a circle: they have been rather imitators of one another than of nature; and this with so faithful an uniformity, and to so remote an antiquity, that it is hard to say who gave the first model. Criticks follow them, and therefore can do little as guides. I can judge but poorly of any thing, whilst I measure it by no other standard than itself. The true standard of the arts is in every man's power; and an easy observation of the most common, sometimes of the meanest things in nature, will give the truest lights, where the greatest sagacity and industry, that slights such observation, must leave us in the dark, or, what is worse, amuse and mislead us by false lights. In an enquiry it is almost every thing to be once in a right road. I am satisfied I have done but little by these observations considered in themselves; and I never should have taken the pains to digest them, much less should I have ever ventured to publish them, if I was not convinced that nothing tends more to the corruption of science than to suffer it to stagnate. These waters must be troubled, before they can exert their virtues. A man who works beyond the surface of things, though he may be wrong himself, yet he clears the way for others, and may chance to make even his errours subservient to the cause of truth. In the following parts I shall enquire what things they are that cause in us the affections of

the sublime and beautiful, as in this I have considered the affections themselves. I only desire one favour,—that no part of this discourse may be judged of by itself, and independently of the rest; for I am sensible I have not disposed my materials to abide the test of a captious controversy, but of a sober and even forgiving examination; that they are not armed at all points for battle, but dressed to visit those who are willing to give a peaceful entrance to truth.

THE END OF THE FIRST PART.

A PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE

ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS

OF THE

SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL.

PART II.

SECTION I.

OF THE PASSION CAUSED BY THE SUBLIME.

THE passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment: and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horrour*. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that, far

* Part I. sect. 3, 4. 7.

far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force. Astonishment, as I have said, is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferiour effects are admiration, reverence, and respect.

SECT. II.

TERROUR.

NO passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as *fear*. *For fear being an apprehension of pain or death, it operates in a manner that resembles actual pain. Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too, whether this cause of terrour be endued with greatness of dimensions or not; for it is impossible to look on any thing as trifling, or contemptible, that may be dangerous. There are many animals, who though far from being large, are yet capable of raising ideas of the sublime, because they are considered as objects of terrour. As serpents and poisonous animals of almost all kinds. And to things of great dimensions, if we annex an adventitious idea of terrour, they become without comparison greater. A level plain of a vast extent on land, is certainly no mean idea; the prospect of such a plain may be as extensive

* Part IV. sect. 3, 4, 5, 6.

extensive as a prospect of the ocean: but can it ever fill the mind with any thing so great as the ocean itself? This is owing to several causes; but it is owing to none more than this, that the ocean is an object of no small terrour. Indeed terrour is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime. Several languages bear a strong testimony to the affinity of these ideas. They frequently use the same word, to signify indifferently the modes of astonishment or admiration and those of terrour. Θάμβος is in Greek, either fear or wonder; δεινὸς is terrible or respectable; αιδεω, to reverence or to fear. *Vereor* in Latin, is what αιδεω is in Greek. The Romans used the verb *stupeo*, a term which strongly marks the state of an astonished mind, to express the effect either of simple fear, or of astonishment; the word *attonitus* (thunder-struck) is equally expressive of the alliance of these ideas; and do not the French *etonnement*, and the English *astonishment* and *amazement*, point out as clearly the kindred emotions which attend fear and wonder? They, who have a more general knowledge of languages, could produce, I make no doubt, many other and equally striking examples.

SECT. III.

OBSCURITY.

TO make any thing very terrible, obscurity* seems in general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes. Every one will be sensible of this, who considers how greatly night adds to our dread, in all cases of danger, and how much the notions of ghosts and goblins, of which none can form clear ideas, affect minds which give credit to the popular tales concerning such sorts of beings. Those despotick governments, which are founded on the passions of men, and principally upon the passion of fear, keep their chief as much as may be from the publick eye. The policy has been the same in many cases of religion. Almost all the heathen temples were dark. Even in the barbarous temples of the Americans at this day, they keep their idol in a dark part of the hut, which is consecrated to his worship. For this purpose too the Druids performed all their ceremonies in the bosom of the darkest woods, and in the shade of the oldest and most spreading oaks. No person seems better to have understood the secret of heightening

* Part IV. sect. 14, 15, 16.

heightening, or of setting terrible things, if I may use the expression, in their strongest light, by the force of a judicious obscurity, than Milton. His description of death in the second book is admirably studied; it is astonishing with what a gloomy pomp, with what a significant and expressive uncertainty of strokes and colouring, he has finished the portrait of the king of terrours:

- - - - - - - - - *The other shape,*
If shape it might be call'd that shape had none
Distinguishable, in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd;
For each seem'd either; black he stood as night;
Fierce as ten furies; terrible as hell;
And shook a deadly dart. What seem'd his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.

In this description all is dark, uncertain, confused, terrible, and sublime to the last degree.

SECT. IV.

OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CLEARNESS AND OBSCURITY WITH REGARD TO THE PASSIONS.

IT is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it *affecting* to the imagination. If I make a drawing of a palace, or a temple, or a

landscape, I present a very clear idea of those objects; but then (allowing for the effect of imitation, which is something) my picture can at most affect only as the palace, temple, or landscape, would have affected in the reality. On the other hand, the most lively and spirited verbal description I can give raises a very obscure and imperfect *idea* of such objects; but then it is in my power to raise a stronger *emotion* by the description than I could do by the best painting. This experience constantly evinces. The proper manner of conveying the *affections* of the mind from one to another, is by words; there is a great insufficiency in all other methods of communication; and so far is a clearness of imagery from being absolutely necessary to an influence upon the passions, that they may be considerably operated upon, without presenting any image at all, by certain sounds adapted to that purpose; of which we have a sufficient proof in the acknowledged and powerful effects of instrumental musick. In reality, a great clearness helps but little towards affecting the passions, as it is in some sort an enemy to all enthusiasms whatsoever.

SECT. [IV.]

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THERE are two verses in Horace's Art of Poetry, that seem to contradict this opinion; for which reason I shall take a little more pains in clearing it up. The verses are,

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.

On this the Abbé du Bos founds a criticism, wherein he gives painting the preference to poetry in the article of moving the passions; principally on account of the greater *clearness* of the ideas it represents. I believe this excellent judge was led into this mistake (if it be a mistake) by his system; to which he found it more conformable than I imagine it will be found to experience. I know several who admire and love painting, and yet who regard the objects of their admiration in that art with coolness enough in comparison of that warmth with which they are animated by affecting pieces of poetry or rhetorick. Among the common sort of people, I never could perceive that painting had much influence on their passions. It is true, that the best sorts of painting, as well as the best sorts of poetry, are not much understood in that sphere.

 But

But it is most certain, that their passions are very strongly roused by a fanatick preacher, or by the ballads of Chevy-chace, or the Children in the Wood, and by other little popular poems and tales that are current in that rank of life. I do not know of any paintings, bad or good, that produce the same effect. So that poetry, with all its obscurity, has a more general, as well as a more powerful dominion over the passions, than the other art. And I think there are reasons in nature, why the obscure idea, when properly conveyed, should be more affecting than the clear. It is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions. Knowledge and acquaintance make the most striking causes affect but little. It is thus with the vulgar; and all men are as the vulgar in what they do not understand. The ideas of eternity, and infinity, are among the most affecting we have: and yet perhaps there is nothing of which we really understand so little, as of infinity and eternity. We do not any where meet a more sublime description than this justly-celebrated one of Milton, wherein he gives the portrait of Satan with a dignity so suitable to the subject:

- - - - - - - - He above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a tower; his form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appear'd

Less

Less than archangel ruin'd, and th' excess
Of glory obscur'd: as when the sun new ris'n
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations; and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. - - -

Here is a very noble picture; and in what does this poetical picture consist? In images of a tower, an archangel, the sun rising through mists, or in an eclipse, the ruin of monarchs, and the revolutions of kingdoms. The mind is hurried out of itself, by a crowd of great and confused images; which affect because they are crowded and confused. For, separate them, and you lose much of the greatness; and join them, and you infallibly lose the clearness. The images raised by poetry are always of this obscure kind; though in general the effects of poetry are by no means to be attributed to the images it raises; which point we shall examine more at large hereafter*. But painting, when we have allowed for the pleasure of imitation, can only affect simply by the images it presents; and even in painting, a judicious obscurity in some things contributes to the effect of the picture; because the images in painting are exactly similar to those in nature; and in nature, dark, confused, uncertain images have a greater power on

* Part V.

on the fancy to form the grander passions, than those have which are more clear and determinate. But where and when this observation may be applied to practice, and how far it shall be extended, will be better deduced from the nature of the subject, and from the occasion, than from any rules that can be given.

I am sensible that this idea has met with opposition, and is likely still to be rejected by several. But let it be considered, that hardly any thing can strike the mind with its greatness, which does not make some sort of approach towards infinity; which nothing can do whilst we are able to perceive its bounds; but to see an object distinctly, and to perceive its bounds, is one and the same thing. A clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea. There is a passage in the book of Job amazingly sublime, and this sublimity is principally due to the terrible uncertainty of the thing described: *In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face. The hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still,* but I could not discern the form thereof; *an image was before mine eyes; there was silence; and I heard a voice,—Shall mortal man be more just than God?* We are first prepared with the utmost solemnity for the vision; we are first terrified, before we are

let

let even into the obscure cause of our emotion: but when this grand cause of terrour makes its appearance, what is it? Is it not wrapt up in the shades of its own incomprehensible darkness, more awful, more striking, more terrible, than the liveliest description, than the clearest painting, could possibly represent it? When painters have attempted to give us clear representations of these very fanciful and terrible ideas, they have, I think, almost always failed; insomuch that I have been at a loss, in all the pictures I have seen of hell, to determine whether the painter did not intend something ludicrous. Several painters have handled a subject of this kind, with a view of assembling as many horrid phantoms as their imagination could suggest; but all the designs I have chanced to meet of the temptations of St. Anthony were rather a sort of odd, wild grotesques, than any thing capable of producing a serious passion. In all these subjects poetry is very happy. Its apparitions, its chimeras, its harpies, its allegorical figures, are grand and affecting; and though Virgil's Fame and Homer's Discord are obscure, they are magnificent figures. These figures in painting would be clear enough, but I fear they might become ridiculous.

SECT. V.

POWER.

BESIDES those things which *directly* suggest the idea of danger, and those which produce a similar effect from a mechanical cause, I know of nothing sublime, which is not some modification of power. And this branch rises, as naturally as the other two branches, from terrour, the common stock of every thing that is sublime. The idea of power, at first view, seems of the class of those indifferent ones, which may equally belong to pain or to pleasure. But in reality, the affection, arising from the idea of vast power, is extremely remote from that neutral character. For first, we must remember*, that the idea of pain, in its highest degree, is much stronger than the highest degree of pleasure; and that it preserves the same superiority through all the subordinate gradations. From hence it is, that where the chances for equal degrees of suffering or enjoyment are in any sort equal, the idea of the suffering must always be prevalent. And indeed the ideas of pain, and, above all, of death, are so very affecting, that whilst we remain in the presence of whatever is supposed to have the power of inflicting either, it is impossible to be perfectly free from terrour. Again, we know by experience,

* Part I. sect. 7.

ence, that, for the enjoyment of pleasure, no great efforts of power are at all necessary; nay, we know, that such efforts would go a great way towards destroying our satisfaction: for pleasure must be stolen, and not forced upon us; pleasure follows the will; and therefore we are generally affected with it by many things of a force greatly inferiour to our own. But pain is always inflicted by a power in some way superiour, because we never submit to pain willingly. So that strength, violence, pain, and terrour, are ideas that rush in upon the mind together. Look at a man, or any other animal of prodigious strength, and what is your idea before reflection? Is it that this strength will be subservient to you, to your ease, to your pleasure, to your interest in any sense? No; the emotion you feel is, lest this enormous strength should be employed to the purposes of * rapine and destruction. That power derives all its sublimity from the terrour with which it is generally accompanied, will appear evidently from its effect in the very few cases, in which it may be possible to strip a considerable degree of strength of its ability to hurt. When you do this, you spoil it of every thing sublime, and it immediately becomes contemptible. An ox is a creature of vast strength; but he is an innocent creature, extremely serviceable, and not at all dangerous; for which reason the

* Vide Part III. sect. 21

the idea of an ox is by no means grand. A bull is strong too: but his strength is of another kind; often very destructive, seldom (at least amongst us) of any use in our business; the idea of a bull is therefore great, and it has frequently a place in sublime descriptions, and elevating comparisons. Let us look at another strong animal, in the two distinct lights in which we may consider him. The horse in the light of an useful beast, fit for the plough, the road, the draft; in every social useful light, the horse has nothing sublime: but is it thus that we are affected with him, *whose neck is clothed with thunder, the glory of whose nostrils is terrible, who swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage, neither believeth that it is the sound of the trumpet?* In this description, the useful character of the horse entirely disappears, and the terrible and sublime blaze out together. We have continually about us animals of a strength that is considerable, but not pernicious. Amongst these we never look for the sublime; it comes upon us in the gloomy forest, and in the howling wilderness, in the form of the lion, the tyger, the panther, or rhinoceros. Whenever strength is only useful, and employed for our benefit or our pleasure, then it is never sublime; for nothing can act agreeably to us, that does not act in conformity to our will; but to act agreeably to our will, it must be subject to us, and therefore can never be the cause of a grand and

commanding conception. The description of the wild ass, in Job, is worked up into no small sublimity, merely by insisting on his freedom, and his setting mankind at defiance; otherwise the description of such an animal could have had nothing noble in it. *Who hath loosed* (says he) *the bands of the wild ass? whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the voice of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture.* The magnificent description of the unicorn and of leviathan, in the same book, is full of the same heightening circumstances: *Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee? canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? wilt thou trust him because his strength is great?—Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?* In short, wheresoever we find strength, and in what light soever we look upon power, we shall all along observe the sublime the concomitant of terrour, and contempt the attendant on a strength that is subservient and innoxious. The race of dogs, in many of their kinds, have generally a competent degree of strength and swiftness; and they exert these and other valuable qualities which they possess, greatly to our convenience and pleasure.

Dogs

Dogs are indeed the most social, affectionate, and amiable animals of the whole brute creation; but love approaches much nearer to contempt than is commonly imagined; and accordingly, though we caress dogs, we borrow from them an appellation of the most despicable kind, when we employ terms of reproach; and this appellation is the common mark of the last vileness and contempt in every language. Wolves have not more strength than several species of dogs; but, on account of their unmanageable fierceness, the idea of a wolf is not despicable; it is not excluded from grand descriptions and similitudes Thus we are affected by strength, which is *natural* power. The power which arises from institution in kings and commanders, has the same connexion with terrour. Sovereigns are frequently addressed with the title of *dread majesty*. And it may be observed, that young persons, little acquainted with the world, and who have not been used to approach men in power, are commonly struck with an awe which takes away the free use of their faculties. *When I prepared my seat in the street,* (says Job) *the young men saw me, and hid themselves.* Indeed, so natural is this timidity with regard to power, and so strongly does it inhere in our constitution, that very few are able to conquer it, but by mixing much in the business of the great world, or by using no small violence to their natural disposi-

tions.

tions. I know some people are of opinion, that no awe, no degree of terrour, accompanies the idea of power; and have hazarded to affirm, that we can contemplate the idea of God himself without any such emotion. I purposely avoided, when I first considered this subject, to introduce the idea of that great and tremendous Being, as an example in an argument so light as this; though it frequently occurred to me, not as an objection to, but as a strong confirmation of, my notions in this matter. I hope, in what I am going to say, I shall avoid presumption, where it is almost impossible for any mortal to speak with strict propriety. I say then, that whilst we consider the Godhead merely as he is an object of the understanding, which forms a complex idea of power, wisdom, justice, goodness, all stretched to a degree far exceeding the bounds of our comprehension, whilst we consider the Divinity in this refined and abstracted light, the imagination and passions are little or nothing affected. But because we are bound, by the condition of our nature, to ascend to these pure and intellectual ideas, through the medium of sensible images, and to judge of these divine qualities by their evident acts and exertions, it becomes extremely hard to disentangle our idea of the cause from the effect by which we are led to know it. Thus when we contemplate the Deity, his attributes and their operation, coming united

united on the mind, form a sort of sensible image, and as such are capable of affecting the imagination. Now, though in a just idea of the Deity, perhaps none of his attributes are predominant, yet, to our imagination, his power is by far the most striking. Some reflection, some comparing, is necessary to satisfy us of his wisdom, his justice, and his goodness. To be struck with his power, it is only necessary that we should open our eyes. But whilst we contemplate so vast an object, under the arm, as it were, of almighty power, and invested upon every side with omnipresence, we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature, and are, in a manner, annihilated before him. And though a consideration of his other attributes may relieve, in some measure, our apprehensions; yet no conviction of the justice with which it is exercised, nor the mercy with which it is tempered, can wholly remove the terrour that naturally arises from a force which nothing can withstand. If we rejoice, we rejoice with trembling: and even whilst we are receiving benefits, we cannot but shudder at a power which can confer benefits of such mighty importance. When the prophet David contemplated the wonders of wisdom and power which are displayed in the economy of man, he seems to be struck with a sort of divine horrour, and cries out, *Fearfully and wonderfully am I made!* An heathen poet has a sentiment of a similar

similar nature; Horace looks upon it as the last effort of philosophical fortitude, to behold without terrour and amazement, this immense and glorious fabrick of the universe:

Hunc solem, et stellas, et decedentia certis
Tempora momentis, sunt qui formidine nulla
Imbuti spectant.

Lucretius is a poet not to be suspected of giving way to superstitious terrours; yet when he supposes the whole mechanism of nature laid open by the master of his philosophy, his transport on this magnificent view, which he has represented in the colours of such bold and lively poetry, is overcast with a shade of secret dread and horrour:

His tibi me rebus quædam divina voluptas
Percipit, atque horror, quod sic Natura tua vi
Tam manifesta patet ex omni parte retecta.

But the Scripture alone can supply ideas answerable to the majesty of this subject. In the Scripture, wherever God is represented as appearing or speaking, every thing terrible in nature is called up to heighten the awe and solemnity of the divine presence. The Psalms, and the prophetical books, are crowded with instances of this kind. *The earth shook* (says the Psalmist), *the heavens also dropped at the presence of the Lord.* And, what is remarkable, the painting preserves the same character,

character, not only when he is supposed descending to take vengeance upon the wicked, but even when he exerts the like plenitude of power in acts of beneficence to mankind. *Tremble, thou earth! at the presence of the Lord; at the presence of the God of Jacob; which turned the rock into standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters!* It were endless to enumerate all the passages, both in the sacred and profane writers, which establish the general sentiment of mankind, concerning the inseparable union of a sacred and reverential awe, with our ideas of the divinity. Hence the common maxim, *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor.* This maxim may be, as I believe it is, false with regard to the origin of religion. The maker of the maxim saw how inseparable these ideas were, without considering that the notion of some great power must be always precedent to our dread of it. But this dread must necessarily follow the idea of such a power, when it is once excited in the mind. It is on this principle that true religion has, and must have, so large a mixture of salutary fear; and that false religions have generally nothing else but fear to support them. Before the Christian religion had, as it were, humanized the idea of the Divinity, and brought it somewhat nearer to us, there was very little said of the love of God. The followers of Plato have something of it, and only something; the other writers of pagan

pagan antiquity, whether poets or philosophers, nothing at all. And they who consider with what infinite attention, by what a disregard of every perishable object, through what long habits of piety and contemplation it is that any man is able to attain an entire love and devotion to the Deity, will easily perceive, that it is not the first, the most natural, and the most striking effect which proceeds from that idea. Thus we have traced power through its several gradations unto the highest of all, where our imagination is finally lost; and we find terrour, quite throughout the progress, its inseparable companion, and growing along with it, as far as we can possibly trace them. Now as power is undoubtedly a capital source of the sublime, this will point out evidently from whence its energy is derived, and to what class of ideas we ought to unite it.

SECT. VI.

PRIVATION.

ALL *general* privations are great, because they are all terrible; *Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude,* and *Silence*. With what a fire of imagination, yet with what severity of judgment, has Virgil amassed all these circumstances, where he knows that all the images of a tremendous dignity ought to be united, at the mouth of hell! Where, before he unlocks

the secrets of the great deep, he seems to be seized with a religious horrour, and to retire astonished at the boldness of his own design:

> *Dii, quibus imperium est animarum, umbræque*
> silentes!
> *Et Chaos, et Phlegethon! loca* nocte silentia *late?*
> *Sit mihi fas audita loqui! sit numine vestro*
> *Pandere res alta terra et* caligine *mersas!*
> *Ibant* obscuri, sola *sub* nocte, *per* umbram,
> *Perque domos Ditis* vacuas, *et* inania *regna.*

> *Ye subterraneous gods! whose awful sway*
> *The gliding ghosts, and* silent *shades obey;*
> *O Chaos hoar! and Phlegethon profound!*
> *Whose solemn empire stretches wide around;*
> *Give me, ye great, tremendous powers, to tell*
> *Of scenes and wonders in the depth of hell;*
> *Give me your mighty secrets to display*
> *From those* black *realms of darkness to the day.*
>
> PITT.

> Obscure *they went through dreary* shades *that led*
> *Along the* waste *dominions of the* dead.
>
> DRYDEN.

SECT. VII.

VASTNESS.

GREATNESS* of dimension is a powerful cause of the sublime. This is too evident, and the observation too common, to need any illustration: it is not so common to consider in what ways greatness of dimension, vastness of extent or quantity, has the most striking effect. For, certainly, there are ways, and modes, wherein the same quantity of extension shall produce greater effects than it is found to do in others. Extension is either in length, height, or depth. Of these the length strikes least; an hundred yards of even ground will never work such an effect as a tower an hundred yards high, or a rock or mountain of that altitude. I am apt to imagine likewise, that height is less grand than depth; and that we are more struck at looking down from a precipice, than looking up at an object of equal height; but of that I am not very positive. A perpendicular has more force in forming the sublime, than an inclined plane; and the effects of a rugged and broken surface seem stronger than where it is smooth and polished. It would carry us out of our way to enter in this place into the cause of these appearances; but certain it is they afford a large

* Part IV. sect. 9.

large and fruitful field of speculation. However, it may not be amiss to add to these remarks upon magnitude, that, as the great extreme of dimension is sublime, so the last extreme of littleness is in some measure sublime likewise: when we attend to the infinite divisibility of matter, when we pursue animal life into these excessively small, and yet organized beings, that escape the nicest inquisition of the sense; when we push our discoveries yet downward, and consider those creatures so many degrees yet smaller, and the still diminishing scale of existence, in tracing which the imagination is lost as well as the sense; we become amazed and confounded at the wonders of minuteness; nor can we distinguish in its effect this extreme of littleness from the vast itself. For division must be infinite as well as addition; because the idea of a perfect unity can no more be arrived at, than that of a complete whole, to which nothing may be added.

SECT. VIII.

INFINITY.

ANOTHER source of the sublime is *Infinity;* if it does not rather belong to the last. Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horrour, which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime. There are scarce

any

any things which can become the objects of our senses, that are really and in their own nature infinite. But the eye not being able to perceive the bounds of many things, they seem to be infinite, and they produce the same effects as if they were really so. We are deceived in the like manner, if the parts of some large object are so continued to any indefinite number, that the imagination meets no check which may hinder its extending them at pleasure.

Whenever we repeat any idea frequently, the mind, by a sort of mechanism, repeats it long after the first cause has ceased to operate*. After whirling about, when we sit down, the objects about us still seem to whirl. After a long succession of noises, as the fall of waters, or the beating of forge-hammers, the hammers beat and the water roars in the imagination long after the first sounds have ceased to affect it; and they die away at last by gradations which are scarcely perceptible. If you hold up a straight pole, with your eye to one end, it will seem extended to a length almost incredible†. Place a number of uniform and equidistant marks on this pole, they will cause the same deception, and seem multiplied without end. The senses, strongly affected in some one manner, cannot quickly change their tenour, or adapt themselves

* Part IV. sect. 12. † Part IV. sect. 14.

selves to other things; but they continue in their old channel until the strength of the first mover decays. This is the reason of an appearance very frequent in madmen; that they remain whole days and nights, sometimes whole years, in the constant repetition of some remark, some complaint, or song; which having struck powerfully on their disordered imagination in the beginning of their phrensy, every repetition reinforces it with new strength; and the hurry of their spirits, unrestrained by the curb of reason, continues it to the end of their lives.

SECT IX.

SUCCESSION AND UNIFORMITY.

SUCCESSION and *uniformity* of parts are what constitute the artificial infinite. 1. *Succession;* which is requisite that the parts may be continued so long and in such a direction, as by their frequent impulses on the sense to impress the imagination with an idea of their progress beyond their actual limits. 2. *Uniformity;* because if the figures of the parts should be changed, the imagination at every change finds a check; you are presented at every alteration with the termination of one idea, and the beginning of another; by which means it becomes impossible to continue that uninterrupted progression, which alone can stamp on bounded objects

objects the character of infinity*. It is in this kind of artificial infinity, I believe, we ought to look for the cause why a rotund has such a noble effect. For in a rotund, whether it be a building or a plantation, you can no where fix a boundary; turn which way you will, the same object still seems to continue, and the imagination has no rest. But the parts must be uniform, as well as circularly disposed, to give this figure its full force; because any difference, whether it be in the disposition, or in the figure, or even in the colour of the parts, is highly prejudicial to the idea of infinity, which every change must check and interrupt, at every alteration commencing a new series. On the same principles of succession and uniformity, the grand appearance of the antient heathen temples, which were generally oblong forms, with a range of uniform pillars on every side, will be easily accounted for. From the same cause also may be derived the grand effect of the ailes in many of our own old cathedrals. The form of a cross used in some churches seems to me not so eligible as the parallelogram of the antients; at least, I imagine it is not so proper for the outside. For, supposing the arms of the cross every way equal, if you stand in a direction parallel

* Mr. Addison, in the Spectators concerning the pleasures of the imagination, thinks it is because in the rotund at one glance you see half the building. This I do not imagine to be the real cause.

parallel to any of the side walls, or colonnades, instead of a deception that makes the building more extended than it is, you are cut off from a considerable part (two thirds) of its *actual* length; and to prevent all possibility of progression, the arms of the cross taking a new direction, make a right angle with the beam, and thereby wholly turn the imagination from the repetition of the former idea. Or suppose the spectator placed where he may take a direct view of such a building, what will be the consequence? the necessary consequence will be, that a good part of the basis of each angle formed by the intersection of the arms of the cross, must be inevitably lost; the whole must of course assume a broken unconnected figure; the lights must be unequal, here strong, and there weak; without that noble gradation, which the perspective always effects on parts disposed uninterruptedly in a right line. Some or all of these objections will lie against every figure of a cross, in whatever view you take it. I exemplified them in the Greek cross, in which these faults appear the most strongly; but they appear in some degree in all sorts of crosses. Indeed there is nothing more prejudicial to the grandeur of buildings, than to abound in angles; a fault obvious in many; and owing to an inordinate thirst for variety, which, whenever it prevails, is sure to leave very little true taste.

SECT. X.

MAGNITUDE IN BUILDING.

TO the sublime in building, greatness of dimension seems requisite; for on a few parts, and those small, the imagination cannot rise to any idea of infinity. No greatness in the manner can effectually compensate for the want of proper dimensions. There is no danger of drawing men into extravagant designs by this rule; it carries its own caution along with it. Because too great a length in buildings destroys the purpose of greatness, which it was intended to promote; the perspective will lessen it in height as it gains in length; and will bring it at last to a point; turning the whole figure into a sort of triangle, the poorest in its effect of almost any figure that can be presented to the eye. I have ever observed, that colonnades and avenues of trees of a moderate length, were, without comparison, far grander, than when they were suffered to run to immense distances. A true artist should put a generous deceit on the spectators, and effect the noblest designs by easy methods. Designs that are vast only by their dimensions, are always the sign of a common and low imagination. No work of art can be great, but as it deceives; to be otherwise is the prerogative of nature only. A good eye will fix the

medium

medium betwixt an excessive length or height (for the same objection lies against both), and a short or broken quantity: and perhaps it might be ascertained to a tolerable degree of exactness, if it was my purpose to descend far into the particulars of any art.

SECT. XI.

INFINITY IN PLEASING OBJECTS.

INFINITY, though of another kind, causes much of our pleasure in agreeable, as well as of our delight in sublime images. The spring is the pleasantest of the seasons; and the young of most animals, though far from being completely fashioned, afford a more agreeable sensation than the full-grown; because the imagination is entertained with the promise of something more, and does not acquiesce in the present object of the sense. In unfinished sketches of drawing, I have often seen something which pleased me beyond the best finishing; and this I believe proceeds from the cause I have just now assigned.

SECT. XII.

DIFFICULTY.

* ANOTHER source of greatness is *Difficulty.* When any work seems to have required immense force and labour to effect it, the idea is grand. Stonehenge, neither for disposition nor ornament, has any thing admirable; but those huge rude masses of stone, set on end, and piled each on other, turn the mind on the immense force necessary for such a work. Nay, the rudeness of the work increases this cause of grandeur, as it excludes the idea of art and contrivance; for dexterity produces another sort of effect, which is different enough from this.

SECT. XIII.

MAGNIFICENCE.

MAGNIFICENCE is likewise a source of the sublime. A great profusion of things, which are splendid or valuable in themselves, is *magnificent.* The starry heaven, though it occurs so very frequently to our view, never fails to excite an idea of grandeur. This cannot be owing to the stars themselves, separately considered. The number is certainly

* Part IV. sect. 4, 5, 6.

certainly the cause. The apparent disorder augments the grandeur, for the appearance of care is highly contrary to our ideas of magnificence. Besides, the stars lie in such apparent confusion, as makes it impossible on ordinary occasions to reckon them. This gives them the advantage of a sort of infinity. In works of art, this kind of grandeur, which consists in multitude, is to be very cautiously admitted; because a profusion of excellent things is not to be attained, or with too much difficulty; and because in many cases this splendid confusion would destroy all use, which should be attended to in most of the works of art with the greatest care; besides it is to be considered, that unless you can produce an appearance of infinity by your disorder, you will have disorder only without magnificence. There are, however, a sort of fireworks, and some other things, that in this way succeed well, and are truly grand. There are also many descriptions in the poets and orators, which owe their sublimity to a richness and profusion of images, in which the mind is so dazzled as to make it impossible to attend to that exact coherence and agreement of the allusions, which we should require on every other occasion. I do not now remember a more striking example of this, than the description which is given of the king's army in the play of Henry the Fourth:

All

- - - - - - All furnish'd, all in arms,
All plum'd like ostriches that with the wind
Baited like eagles having lately bathed:
As full of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sun in Midsummer,
Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.
I saw young Harry with his beaver on
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury;
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,
As if an angel dropped from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus.

In that excellent book, so remarkable for the vivacity of its descriptions, as well as the solidity and penetration of its sentences, the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, there is a noble panegyrick on the high priest Simon the son of Onias; and it is a very fine example of the point before us:

How was he honoured in the midst of the people, in his coming out of the sanctuary! He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full; as the sun shining upon the temple of the Most High, and as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds: and as the flower of roses in the spring of the year, as lilies by the rivers of waters, and as the frankincense tree in summer; as fire and incense in the censer, and as a vessel of gold set with precious stones; as a fair olive tree budding forth fruit, and as a cypress which groweth up

to the clouds. When he put on the robe of honour, and was clothed with the perfection of glory, when he went up to the holy altar, he made the garment of holiness honourable. He himself stood by the hearth of the altar, compassed with his brethren round about; as a young cedar in Libanus, and as palm trees compassed they him about. So were all the sons of Aaron in their glory, and the oblations of the Lord in their hands, &c.

SECT. XIV.

LIGHT.

HAVING considered extension, so far as it is capable of raising ideas of greatness; *colour* comes next under consideration. All colours depend on *light.* Light therefore ought previously to be examined; and with it its opposite, darkness. With regard to light, to make it a cause capable of producing the sublime, it must be attended with some circumstances, besides its bare faculty of shewing other objects. Mere light is too common a thing to make a strong impression on the mind, and without a strong impression nothing can be sublime. But such a light as that of the sun, immediately exerted on the eye, as it overpowers the sense, is a very great idea. Light of an inferiour strength to this, if it moves with great celerity, has

has the same power; for lightning is certainly productive of grandeur, which it owes chiefly to the extreme velocity of its motion. A quick transition from light to darkness, or from darkness to light, has yet a greater effect. But darkness is more productive of sublime ideas than light. Our great poet was convinced of this; and indeed so full was he of this idea, so entirely possessed with the power of a well-managed darkness, that in describing the appearance of the Deity, amidst that profusion of magnificent images, which the grandeur of his subject provokes him to pour out upon every side, he is far from forgetting the obscurity which surrounds the most incomprehensible of all beings, but

> - - - *With majesty of* darkness *round*
> *Circles his throne*. - - -

And what is no less remarkable, our author had the secret of preserving this idea, even when he seemed to depart the farthest from it, when he describes the light and glory which flows from the divine presence; a light which by its very excess is converted into a species of darkness—

> Dark *with excessive* light *thy skirts appear.*

Here is an idea not only poetical in an high degree, but strictly and philosophically just. Extreme light, by overcoming the organs of sight, obliterates

all objects, so as in its effect exactly to resemble darkness. After looking for some time at the sun, two black spots, the impression which it leaves, seem to dance before our eyes. Thus are two ideas as opposite as can be imagined reconciled in the extremes of both; and both in spite of their opposite nature brought to concur in producing the sublime. And this is not the only instance wherein the opposite extremes operate equally in favour of the sublime, which in all things abhors mediocrity.

SECT. XV.

LIGHT IN BUILDING.

AS the management of light is a matter of importance in architecture, it is worth enquiring, how far this remark is applicable to building. I think then, that all edifices calculated to produce an idea of the sublime, ought rather to be dark and gloomy, and this for two reasons; the first is, that darkness itself on other occasions is known by experience to have a greater effect on the passions than light. The second is, that to make an object very striking, we should make it as different as possible from the objects with which we have been immediately conversant; when therefore you enter a building, you cannot pass into a

greater

greater light than you had in the open air; to go into one some few degrees less luminous, can make only a trifling change; but to make the transition thoroughly striking, you ought to pass from the greatest light, to as much darkness as is consistent with the uses of architecture. At night the contrary rule will hold, but for the very same reason; and the more highly a room is then illuminated, the grander will the passion be.

SECT. XVI.

COLOUR CONSIDERED AS PRODUCTIVE OF THE SUBLIME.

AMONG colours, such as are soft or cheerful (except perhaps a strong red, which is cheerful) are unfit to produce grand images. An immense mountain covered with a shining green turf, is nothing, in this respect, to one dark and gloomy; the cloudy sky is more grand than the blue; and night more sublime and solemn than day. Therefore in historical painting, a gay or gaudy drapery can never have a happy effect: and in buildings, when the highest degree of the sublime is intended, the materials and ornaments ought neither to be white, nor green, nor yellow, nor blue, nor of a pale red, nor violet, nor spotted, but of sad and fuscous colours, as black, or brown, or deep

 purple,

purple, and the like. Much of gilding, mosaicks, painting, or statues, contribute but little to the sublime. This rule need not be put in practice, except where an uniform degree of the most striking sublimity is to be produced, and that in every particular; for it ought to be observed, that this melancholy kind of greatness, though it be certainly the highest, ought not to be studied in all sorts of edifices, where yet grandeur must be studied: in such cases the sublimity must be drawn from the other sources; with a strict caution however against any thing light and riant; as nothing so effectually deadens the whole taste of the sublime.

SECT. XVII.

SOUND AND LOUDNESS.

THE eye is not the only organ of sensation by which a sublime passion may be produced. Sounds have a great power in these as in most other passions. I do not mean words, because words do not affect simply by their sounds, but by means altogether different. Excessive loudness alone is sufficient to overpower the soul, to suspend its action, and to fill it with terrour. The noise of vast cataracts, raging storms, thunder, or artillery, awake a great and awful sensation in the mind, though we can observe no nicety or artifice in

those sorts of musick. The shouting of multitudes has a similar effect; and, by the sole strength of the sound, so amazes and confounds the imagination, that, in this staggering and hurry of the mind, the best established tempers can scarcely forbear being borne down, and joining in the common cry, and common resolution of the crowd.

SECT. XVIII.

SUDDENNESS.

A SUDDEN beginning, or sudden cessation of sound of any considerable force, has the same power. The attention is roused by this; and the faculties driven forward, as it were, on their guard. Whatever, either in sights or sounds, makes the transition from one extreme to the other easy, causes no terrour, and consequently can be no cause of greatness. In every thing sudden and unexpected, we are apt to start; that is, we have a perception of danger, and our nature rouses us to guard against it. It may be observed that a single sound of some strength, though but of short duration, if repeated after intervals, has a grand effect. Few things are more awful than the striking of a great clock, when the silence of the night prevents the attention from being too much dissipated. The same may be said of a single stroke on

a drum, repeated with pauses; and of the successive firing of cannon at a distance. All the effects mentioned in this section have causes very nearly alike.

SECT. XIX.

INTERMITTING.

A LOW, tremulous, intermitting sound, though it seems in some respects opposite to that just mentioned, is productive of the sublime. It is worth while to examine this a little. The fact itself must be determined by every man's own experience and reflection. I have already observed, that *night increases our terrour, more perhaps than any thing else; it is our nature, when we do not know what may happen to us, to fear the worst that can happen; and hence it is, that uncertainty is so terrible, that we often seek to be rid of it, at the hazard of a certain mischief. Now, some low, confused, uncertain sounds, leave us in the same fearful anxiety concerning their causes, that no light, or an uncertain light, does concerning the objects that surround us.

Quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna
Est iter in sylvis. - - -

- - - *A faint*

* Sect. 3

- - - *A faint shadow of uncertain light,*
Like as a lamp, whose life doth fade away;
Or as the moon clothed with cloudy night
Doth shew to him who walks in fear and great affright.

SPENSER.

But light now appearing, and now leaving us, and so off and on, is even more terrible than total darkness: and a sort of uncertain sounds are, when the necessary dispositions concur, more alarming than a total silence.

SECT. XX.

THE CRIES OF ANIMALS.

SUCH sounds as imitate the natural inarticulate voices of men, or any animals in pain or danger, are capable of conveying great ideas; unless it be the well-known voice of some creature, on which we are used to look with contempt. The angry tones of wild beasts are equally capable of causing a great and awful sensation.

Hinc exaudiri gemitus, iræque leonum
Vincla recusantum, et sera sub nocte rudentum;
Setigerique sues, atque in præsepibus ursi
Sævire; et formæ magnorum ululare luporum.

It might seem that these modulations of sound carry some connexion with the nature of the

 things

things they represent, and are not merely arbitrary; because the natural cries of all animals, even of those animals with whom we have not been acquainted, never fail to make themselves sufficiently understood; this cannot be said of language. The modifications of sound, which may be productive of the sublime, are almost infinite. Those I have mentioned are only a few instances to shew on what principles they are all built.

SECT. XXI.

SMELL AND TASTE. BITTERS AND STENCHES.

SMELLS and *Tastes*, have some share too in ideas of greatness; but it is a small one, weak in its nature, and confined in its operations. I shall only observe, that no smells or tastes can produce a grand sensation, except excessive bitters, and intolerable stenches. It is true, that these affections of the smell and taste, when they are in their full force, and lean directly upon the sensory, are simply painful, and accompanied with no sort of delight; but when they are moderated, as in a description or narrative, they become sources of the sublime, as genuine as any other, and upon the very same principle of a moderated pain. "A cup of bitter-"ness;" "to drain the bitter cup of fortune;"

"the

"the bitter apples of Sodom;" these are all ideas suitable to a sublime description. Nor is this passage of Virgil without sublimity, where the stench of the vapour in Albunea conspires so happily with the sacred horrour and gloominess of that prophetick forest:

> *At rex sollicitus monstris oracula Fauni*
> *Fatidici genitoris adit, lucosque sub alta*
> *Consulit Albunea, nemorum quæ maxima sacro*
> *Fonte sonat;* sævamque exhalat opaca Mephitim.

In the sixth book, and in a very sublime description, the poisonous exhalation of Acheron is not forgotten, nor does it at all disagree with the other images amongst which it is introduced:

> *Spelunca* alta *fuit,* vastoque immanis *hiatu*
> *Scrupea, tuta* lacu nigro, *nemorumque* tenebris;
> *Quam super haud ullæ poterant impune volantes*
> *Tendere iter pennis:* talis sese halitus atris
> Faucibus effundens supera ad convexa ferebat.

I have added these examples, because some friends, for whose judgment I have great deference, were of opinion, that if the sentiment stood nakedly by itself, it would be subject, at first view, to burlesque and ridicule; but this I imagine would principally arise from considering the bitterness

and stench in company with mean and contemptible ideas, with which it must be owned they are often united; such an union degrades the sublime in all other instances as well as in those. But it is one of the tests by which the sublimity of an image is to be tried, not whether it becomes mean when associated with mean ideas; but whether, when united with images of an allowed grandeur, the whole composition is supported with dignity. Things which are terrible are always great; but when things possess disagreeable qualities, or such as have indeed some degree of danger, but of a danger easily overcome, they are merely *odious;* as toads and spiders.

SECT. XXII.

FEELING. PAIN.

OF *Feeling*, little more can be said than that the idea of bodily pain, in all the modes and degrees of labour, pain, anguish, torment, is productive of the sublime; and nothing else in this sense can produce it. I need not give here any fresh instances, as those given in the former sections abundantly illustrate a remark that, in reality, wants only an attention to nature, to be made by every body.

Having

Having thus run through the causes of the sublime with reference to all the senses, my first observation (sect. 7.) will be found very nearly true; that the sublime is an idea belonging to self-preservation; that it is therefore one of the most affecting we have; that its strongest emotion is an emotion of distress; and that no *pleasure from a positive cause belongs to it. Numberless examples, besides those mentioned, might be brought in support of these truths, and many perhaps useful consequences drawn from them—

Sed fugit interea, fugit irrevocabile tempus,
Singula dum capti circumvectamur amore.

* Vide Part I. sect. 6.

THE END OF THE SECOND PART.

A PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE

ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS

OF THE

SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL.

PART III.

SECTION I.

OF BEAUTY.

IT is my design to consider beauty as distinguished from the sublime; and, in the course of the enquiry, to examine how far it is consistent with it. But previous to this, we must take a short review of the opinions already entertained of this quality; which I think are hardly to be reduced to any fixed principles; because men are used to talk of beauty in a figurative manner, that is to say, in a manner extremely uncertain, and indeterminate. By beauty, I mean that quality, or those qualities in bodies, by which they cause love,

love, or some passion similar to it. I confine this definition to the merely sensible qualities of things, for the sake of preserving the utmost simplicity in a subject, which must always distract us whenever we take in those various causes of sympathy which attach us to any persons or things from secondary considerations, and not from the direct force which they have merely on being viewed. I likewise distinguish love, (by which I mean that satisfaction which arises to the mind upon contemplating any thing beautiful, of whatsoever nature it may be,) from desire or lust; which is an energy of the mind, that hurries us on to the possession of certain objects, that do not affect us as they are beautiful, but by means altogether different. We shall have a strong desire for a woman of no remarkable beauty; whilst the greatest beauty in men, or in other animals, though it causes love, yet excites nothing at all of desire. Which shews that beauty, and the passion caused by beauty, which I call love, is different from desire, though desire may sometimes operate along with it; but it is to this latter that we must attribute those violent and tempestuous passions, and the consequent emotions of the body which attend what is called love in some of its ordinary acceptations, and not to the effects of beauty merely as it is such.

SECT. II.

PROPORTION NOT THE CAUSE OF BEAUTY IN VEGETABLES.

BEAUTY hath usually been said to consist in certain proportions of parts. On considering the matter, I have great reason to doubt, whether beauty be at all an idea belonging to proportion. Proportion relates almost wholly to convenience, as every idea of order seems to do; and it must therefore be considered as a creature of the understanding, rather than a primary cause acting on the senses and imagination. It is not by the force of long attention and enquiry that we find any object to be beautiful; beauty demands no assistance from our reasoning; even the will is unconcerned; the appearance of beauty as effectually causes some degree of love in us, as the application of ice or fire produces the ideas of heat or cold. To gain something like a satisfactory conclusion in this point, it were well to examine, what proportion is; since several who make use of that word do not always seem to understand very clearly the force of the term, nor to have very distinct ideas concerning the thing itself. Proportion is the measure of relative quantity. Since all quantity is divisible, it is evident that every distinct part, into which any quantity is divided,

must

must bear some relation to the other parts, or to the whole. These relations give an origin to the idea of proportion. They are discovered by mensuration, and they are the objects of mathematical enquiry. But whether any part of any determinate quantity be a fourth, or a fifth, or a sixth, or a moiety of the whole; or whether it be of equal length with any other part, or double its length, or but one half, is a matter merely indifferent to the mind; it stands neuter in the question; and it is from this absolute indifference and tranquillity of the mind, that mathematical speculations derive some of their most considerable advantages; because there is nothing to interest the imagination; because the judgment sits free and unbiassed to examine the point. All proportions, every arrangement of quantity, is alike to the understanding, because the same truths result to it from all; from greater, from lesser, from equality and inequality. But surely beauty is no idea belonging to mensuration; nor has it any thing to do with calculation and geometry. If it had, we might then point out some certain measures which we could demonstrate to be beautiful, either as simply considered, or as related to others; and we could call in those natural objects, for whose beauty we have no voucher but the sense, to this happy standard, and confirm the voice of our passions by the determination of our reason. But since we have

not

not this help, let us see whether proportion can in any sense be considered as the cause of beauty, as hath been so generally, and, by some, so confidently affirmed. If proportion be one of the constituents of beauty, it must derive that power either from some natural properties inherent in certain measures, which operate mechanically; from the operation of custom; or from the fitness which some measures have to answer some particular ends of conveniency. Our business therefore is to enquire, whether the parts of those objects, which are found beautiful in the vegetable or animal kingdoms, are constantly so formed according to such certain measures, as may serve to satisfy us that their beauty results from those measures, on the principle of a natural mechanical cause; or from custom; or, in fine, from their fitness for any determinate purposes. I intend to examine this point under each of these heads in their order. But before I proceed further, I hope it will not be thought amiss, if I lay down the rules which governed me in this enquiry, and which have misled me in it, if I have gone astray. 1. If two bodies produce the same or a similar effect on the mind, and on examination they are found to agree in some of their properties, and to differ in others; the common effect is to be attributed to the properties in which they agree, and not to those in which they differ. 2. Not to account for the effect

effect of a natural object from the effect of an artificial object. 3. Not to account for the effect of any natural object from a conclusion of our reason concerning its uses, if a natural cause may be assigned. 4. Not to admit any determinate quantity, or any relation of quantity, as the cause of a certain effect, if the effect is produced by different or opposite measures and relations; or if these measures and relations may exist, and yet the effect may not be produced. These are the rules which I have chiefly followed, whilst I examined into the power of proportion considered as a natural cause; and these, if he thinks them just, I request the reader to carry with him throughout the following discussion; whilst we enquire in the first place, in what things we find this quality of beauty; next, to see whether in these we can find any assignable proportions, in such a manner as ought to convince us that our idea of beauty results from them. We shall consider this pleasing power, as it appears in vegetables, in the inferiour animals, and in man. Turning our eyes to the vegetable creation, we find nothing there so beautiful as flowers; but flowers are almost of every sort of shape, and of every sort of disposition; they are turned and fashioned into an infinite variety of forms; and from these forms botanists have given them their names, which are almost as various. What proportion do we discover between the stalks and the

leaves

leaves of flowers, or between the leaves and the pistils? How does the slender stalk of the rose agree with the bulky head under which it bends? but the rose is a beautiful flower; and can we undertake to say that it does not owe a great deal of its beauty even to that disproportion; the rose is a large flower, yet it grows upon a small shrub; the flower of the apple is very small, and grows upon a large tree; yet the rose and the apple blossom are both beautiful, and the plants that bear them are most engagingly attired, notwithstanding this disproportion. What by general consent is allowed to be a more beautiful object than an orange-tree, flourishing at once with its leaves, its blossoms, and its fruit? but it is in vain that we search here for any proportion between the height, the breadth, or any thing else concerning the dimensions of the whole, or concerning the relation of the particular parts to each other. I grant that we may observe, in many flowers, something of a regular figure, and of a methodical disposition of the leaves. The rose has such a figure and such a disposition of its petals; but in an oblique view, when this figure is in a good measure lost, and the order of the leaves confounded, it yet retains its beauty; the rose is even more beautiful before it is full blown; in the bud; before this exact figure is formed; and this is not the only instance wherein method and exactness,

the soul of proportion, are found rather prejudicial than serviceable to the cause of beauty.

SECT. III.

PROPORTION NOT THE CAUSE OF BEAUTY IN ANIMALS.

THAT proportion has but a small share in the formation of beauty, is full as evident among animals. Here the greatest variety of shapes and dispositions of parts are well fitted to excite this idea. The swan, confessedly a beautiful bird, has a neck longer than the rest of his body, and but a very short tail: is this a beautiful proportion? We must allow that it is. But then what shall we say to the peacock, who has comparatively but a short neck, with a tail longer than the neck and the rest of the body taken together? How many birds are there that vary infinitely from each of these standards, and from every other which you can fix; with proportions different, and often directly opposite to each other! and yet many of these birds are extremely beautiful; when upon considering them we find nothing in any one part that might determine us, *a priori*, to say what the others ought to be, nor indeed to guess any thing about them, but what experience might shew to be full of disappointment and mistake. And with regard to the colours either of birds or flowers, for there

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is something similar in the colouring of both, whether they are considered in their extension or gradation, there is nothing of proportion to be observed. Some are of but one single colour; others have all the colours of the rainbow; some are of the primary colours, others are of the mixt; in short, an attentive observer may soon conclude, that there is as little of proportion in the colouring as in the shapes of these objects. Turn next to beasts; examine the head of a beautiful horse; find what proportion that bears to his body, and to his limbs, and what relation these have to each other; and when you have settled these proportions as a standard of beauty, then take a dog or cat, or any other animal, and examine how far the same proportions between their heads and their necks, between those and the body, and so on, are found to hold; I think we may safely say, that they differ in every species, yet that there are individuals, found in a great many species so differing, that have a very striking beauty. Now, if it be allowed that very different, and even contrary forms and dispositions are consistent with beauty, it amounts I believe to a concession, that no certain measures, operating from a natural principle, are necessary to produce it: at least so far as the brute species is concerned.

SECT. IV.

PROPORTION NOT THE CAUSE OF BEAUTY IN THE HUMAN SPECIES.

THERE are some parts of the human body, that are observed to hold certain proportions to each other; but before it can be proved, that the efficient cause of beauty lies in these, it must be shewn, that wherever these are found exact, the person to whom they belong is beautiful: I mean in the effect produced on the view, either of any member distinctly considered, or of the whole body together. It must be likewise shewn, that these parts stand in such a relation to each other, that the comparison between them may be easily made, and that the affection of the mind may naturally result from it. For my part, I have at several times very carefully examined many of those proportions, and found them hold very nearly, or altogether alike in many subjects, which were not only very different from one another, but where one has been very beautiful, and the other very remote from beauty. With regard to the parts which are found so proportioned, they are often so remote from each other, in situation, nature, and office, that I cannot see how they admit of any comparison, nor consequently how any effect owing to proportion can result from them. The neck, say they,

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in beautiful bodies, should measure with the calf of the leg; it should likewise be twice the circumference of the wrist. And an infinity of observations of this kind are to be found in the writings and conversations of many. But what relation has the calf of the leg to the neck; or either of these parts to the wrist? These proportions are certainly to be found in handsome bodies. They are as certainly in ugly ones; as any who will take the pains to try may find. Nay, I do not know but they may be least perfect in some of the most beautiful. You may assign any proportions you please to every part of the human body; and I undertake that a painter shall religiously observe them all, and notwithstanding produce, if he pleases, a very ugly figure. The same painter shall considerably deviate from these proportions, and produce a very beautiful one. And indeed it may be observed in the master-pieces of the ancient and modern statuary, that several of them differ very widely from the proportions of others, in parts very conspicuous and of great consideration; and that they differ no less from the proportions we find in living men, of forms extremely striking and agreeable. And after all, how are the partisans of proportional beauty agreed amongst themselves about the proportions of the human body? Some hold it to be seven heads; some make it eight; whilst others extend it even to ten; a vast difference in such a

small number of divisions! Others take other methods of estimating the proportions, and all with equal success. But are these proportions exactly the same in all handsome men? or are they at all the proportions found in beautiful women? Nobody will say that they are; yet both sexes are undoubtedly capable of beauty, and the female of the greatest; which advantage I believe will hardly be attributed to the superior exactness of proportion in the fair sex. Let us rest a moment on this point; and consider how much difference there is between the measures that prevail in many similar parts of the body, in the two sexes of this single species only. If you assign any determinate proportions to the limbs of a man, and if you limit human beauty to these proportions, when you find a woman who differs in the make and measures of almost every part, you must conclude her not to be beautiful, in spite of the suggestions of your imagination; or, in obedience to your imagination, you must renounce your rules; you must lay by the scale and compass, and look out for some other cause of beauty. For if beauty be attached to certain measures which operate from a *principle in nature*, why should similar parts with different measures of proportion be found to have beauty, and this too in the very same species? But to open our view a little, it is worth observing, that almost all animals have parts of very

much the same nature, and destined nearly to the same purposes; a head, neck, body, feet, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth; yet Providence, to provide in the best manner for their several wants, and to display the riches of his wisdom and goodness in his creation, has worked out of these few and similar organs, and members, a diversity hardly short of infinite in their disposition, measures, and relation. But, as we have before observed, amidst this infinite diversity, one particular is common to many species: several of the individuals which compose them are capable of affecting us with a sense of loveliness; and whilst they agree in producing this effect, they differ extremely in the relative measures of those parts which have produced it. These considerations were sufficient to induce me to reject the notion of any particular proportions that operated by nature to produce a pleasing effect; but those who will agree with me with regard to a particular proportion, are strongly prepossessed in favour of one more indefinite. They imagine, that although beauty in general is annexed to no certain measures common to the several kinds of pleasing plants and animals; yet that there is a certain proportion in each species absolutely essential to the beauty of that particular kind. If we consider the animal world in general, we find beauty confined to no certain measures; but as some

peculiar measure and relation of parts is what distinguishes each peculiar class of animals, it must of necessity be, that the beautiful in each kind will be found in the measures and proportions of that kind; for otherwise it would deviate from its proper species, and become in some sort monstrous: however, no species is so strictly confined to any certain proportions, that there is not a considerable variation amongst the individuals; and as it has been shewn of the human, so it may be shewn of the brute kinds, that beauty is found indifferently in all the proportions which each kind can admit, without quitting its common form; and it is this idea of a common form that makes the proportion of parts at all regarded, and not the operation of any natural cause: indeed a little consideration will make it appear, that it is not measure but manner that creates all the beauty which belongs to shape. What lights do we borrow from these boasted proportions, when we study ornamental design? It seems amazing to me, that artists, if they were as well convinced as they pretend to be, that proportion is a principal cause of beauty, have not by them at all times accurate measurements of all sorts of beautiful animals to help them to proper proportions, when they would contrive any thing elegant; especially as they frequently assert, that it is from an observation of the beautiful in nature they direct their practice.

practice. I know that it has been said long since, and echoed backward and forward from one writer to another a thousand times, that the proportions of building have been taken from those of the human body. To make this forced analogy complete, they represent a man with his arms raised and extended at full length, and then describe a sort of square, as it is formed by passing lines along the extremities of this strange figure. But it appears very clearly to me, that the human figure never supplied the architect with any of his ideas. For in the first place, men are very rarely seen in this strained posture ; it is not natural to them ; neither is it at all becoming. Secondly, the view of the human figure so disposed, does not naturally suggest the idea of a square, but rather of a cross ; as that large space between the arms and the ground must be filled with something before it can make any body think of a square. Thirdly, several buildings are by no means of the form of that particular square, which are notwithstanding planned by the best architects, and produce an effect altogether as good, and perhaps a better. And certainly nothing could be more unaccountably whimsical, than for an architect to model his performance by the human figure, since no two things can have less resemblance or analogy, than a man, and a house or temple : do we need to observe, that their purposes

purposes are entirely different? What I am apt to suspect is this: that these analogies were devised to give a credit to the works of art, by shewing a conformity between them and the noblest works in nature; not that the latter served at all to supply hints for the perfection of the former. And I am the more fully convinced, that the patrons of proportion have transferred their artificial ideas to nature, and not borrowed from thence the proportions they use in works of art; because in any discussion of this subject they always quit as soon as possible the open field of natural beauties, the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and fortify themselves within the artificial lines and angles of architecture. For there is in mankind an unfortunate propensity to make themselves, their views, and their works, the measure of excellence in every thing whatsoever. Therefore having observed that their dwellings were most commodious and firm when they were thrown into regular figures, with parts answerable to each other; they transferred these ideas to their gardens; they turned their trees into pillars, pyramids, and obelisks; they formed their hedges into so many green walls, and fashioned their walks into squares, triangles, and other mathematical figures, with exactness and symmetry; and they thought, if if they were not imitating, they were at least improving nature, and teaching her to know her

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business. But nature has at last escaped from their discipline and their fetters; and our gardens, if nothing else, declare, we begin to feel that mathematical ideas are not the true measures of beauty. And surely they are full as little so in the animal, as the vegetable world. For is it not extraordinary, that in these fine descriptive pieces, these innumerable odes and elegies which are in the mouths of all the world, and many of which have been the entertainment of ages, that in these pieces which describe love with such a passionate energy, and represent its object in such an infinite variety of lights, not one word is said of proportion, if it be, what some insist it is, the principal component of beauty; whilst, at the same time, several other qualities are very frequently and warmly mentioned? But if proportion has not this power, it may appear odd how men came originally to be so prepossessed in its favour. It arose, I imagine, from the fondness I have just mentioned, which men bear so remarkably to their own works and notions; it arose from false reasonings on the effects of the customary figure of animals; it arose from the Platonick theory of fitness and aptitude. For which reason, in the next section, I shall consider the effects of custom in the figure of animals; and afterwards the idea of fitness: since if proportion does not operate by a natural power attending some measures, it must be either by custom, or the idea of utility; there is no other way.

SECT. V.

PROPORTION FURTHER CONSIDERED.

IF I am not mistaken, a great deal of the prejudice in favour of proportion has arisen, not so much from the observation of any certain measures found in beautiful bodies, as from a wrong idea of the relation which deformity bears to beauty, to which it has been considered as the opposite; on this principle it was concluded, that where the causes of deformity were removed, beauty must naturally and necessarily be introduced. This I believe is a mistake. For *deformity* is opposed not to beauty, but to the *complete common form*. If one of the legs of a man be found shorter than the other, the man is deformed; because there is something wanting to complete the whole idea we form of a man; and this has the same effect in natural faults, as maiming and mutilation produce from accidents. So if the back be humped, the man is deformed; because his back has an unusual figure, and what carries with it the idea of some disease or misfortune; so if a man's neck be considerably longer or shorter than usual, we say he is deformed in that part, because men are not commonly made in that manner. But surely every hour's experience may convince us, that a man may have his legs of an equal length, and

and resembling each other in all respects, and his neck of a just size, and his back quite straight, without having at the same time the least perceivable beauty. Indeed beauty is so far from belonging to the idea of custom, that in reality what affects us in that manner is extremely rare and uncommon. The beautiful strikes us as much by its novelty as the deformed itself. It is thus in those species of animals with which we are acquainted; and if one of a new species were represented, we should by no means wait until custom had settled an idea of proportion, before we decided concerning its beauty or ugliness: which shews that the general idea of beauty can be no more owing to customary than to natural proportion. Deformity arises from the want of the common proportions: but the necessary result of their existence in any object is not beauty. If we suppose proportion in natural things to be relative to custom and use, the nature of use and custom will shew, that beauty, which is a *positive* and powerful quality, cannot result from it. We are so wonderfully formed, that, whilst we are creatures vehemently desirous of novelty, we are as strongly attached to habit and custom. But it is the nature of things which hold us by custom, to affect us very little whilst we are in possession of them, but strongly when they are absent. I remember to have frequented a certain place, every day for a long time together;

together; and I may truly say, that so far from finding pleasure in it, I was affected with a sort of weariness and disgust; I came, I went, I returned, without pleasure; yet if by any means I passed by the usual time of my going thither, I was remarkably uneasy, and was not quiet till I had got into my old track. They who use snuff, take it almost without being sensible that they take it, and the acute sense of smell is deadened, so as to feel hardly any thing from so sharp a stimulus; yet deprive the snuff-taker of his box, and he is the most uneasy mortal in the world. Indeed so far are use and habit from being causes of pleasure, merely as such, that the effect of constant use is to make all things of whatever kind entirely unaffecting. For as use at last takes off the painful effect of many things, it reduces the pleasurable effect in others in the same manner, and brings both to a sort of mediocrity and indifference. Very justly is use called a second nature; and our natural and common state is one of absolute indifference, equally prepared for pain or pleasure. But when we are thrown out of this state, or deprived of any thing requisite to maintain us in it; when this chance does not happen by pleasure from some mechanical cause, we are always hurt. It is so with the second nature, custom, in all things which relate to it. Thus the want of the usual proportions in men and other animals is sure to disgust, though their presence is

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by no means any cause of real pleasure. It is true, that the proportions laid down as causes of beauty in the human body, are frequently found in beautiful ones, because they are generally found in all mankind; but if it can be shewn too, that they are found without beauty, and that beauty frequently exists without them, and that this beauty, where it exists, always can be assigned to other less equivocal causes, it will naturally lead us to conclude, that proportion and beauty are not ideas of the same nature. The true opposite to beauty is not disproportion or deformity, but *ugliness*: and as it proceeds from causes opposite to those of positive beauty, we cannot consider it until we come to treat of that. Between beauty and ugliness there is a sort of mediocrity, in which the assigned proportions are most commonly found; but this has no effect upon the passions.

SECT. VI.

FITNESS NOT THE CAUSE OF BEAUTY.

IT is said that the idea of utility, or of a part's being well adapted to answer its end, is the cause of beauty, or indeed beauty itself. If it were not for this opinion, it had been impossible for the doctrine of proportion to have held its ground very long; the world would be soon weary of hearing of measures which related to nothing,

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either of a natural principle, or of a fitness to answer some end; the idea which mankind most commonly conceive of proportion, is the suitableness of means to certain ends, and, where this is not the question, very seldom trouble themselves about the effect of different measures of things. Therefore it was necessary for this theory to insist that not only artificial, but natural objects took their beauty from the fitness of the parts for their several purposes. But in framing this theory, I am apprehensive that experience was not sufficiently consulted. For, on that principle, the wedge-like snout of a swine, with its tough cartilage at the end, the little sunk eyes, and the whole make of the head, so well adapted to its offices of digging and rooting, would be extremely beautiful. The great bag hanging to the bill of a pelican, a thing highly useful to this animal, would be likewise as beautiful in our eyes. The hedge-hog, so well secured against all assaults by his prickly hide, and the porcupine with his missile quills, would be then considered as creatures of no small elegance. There are few animals whose parts are better contrived than those of a monkey; he has the hands of a man, joined to the springy limbs of a beast; he is admirably calculated for running, leaping, grappling, and climbing; and yet there are few animals which seem to have less beauty in the eyes of all mankind. I need say little on the trunk of the

the elephant, of such various usefulness, and which is so far from contributing to his beauty. How well fitted is the wolf for running and leaping! how admirably is the lion armed for battle! but will any one therefore call the elephant, the wolf, and the lion, beautiful animals? I believe nobody will think the form of a man's leg so well adapted to running, as those of a horse, a dog, a deer, and several other creatures; at least they have not that appearance: yet, I believe, a well-fashioned human leg will be allowed to far exceed all these in beauty. If the fitness of parts was what constituted the loveliness of their form, the actual employment of them would undoubtedly much augment it; but this, though it is sometimes so upon another principle, is far from being always the case. A bird on the wing is not so beautiful as when it is perched; nay, there are several of the domestick fowls which are seldom seen to fly, and which are nothing the less beautiful on that account; yet birds are so extremely different in their form from the beast and human kinds, that you cannot, on the principle of fitness, allow them any thing agreeable, but in consideration of their parts being designed for quite other purposes. I never in my life chanced to see a peacock fly; and yet before, very long before I considered any aptitude in his form for the aerial life, I was struck with the extreme beauty which raises that bird

above many of the best flying fowls in the world; though, for any thing I saw, his way of living was much like that of the swine, which fed in the farm-yard along with him. The same may be said of cocks, hens, and the like; they are of the flying kind in figure; in their manner of moving not very different from men and beasts. To leave these foreign examples; if beauty in our own species was annexed to use, men would be much more lovely than women; and strength and agility would be considered as the only beauties. But to call strength by the name of beauty, to have but one denomination for the qualities of a Venus and Hercules, so totally different in almost all respects, is surely a strange confusion of ideas, or abuse of words. The cause of this confusion, I imagine, proceeds from our frequently perceiving the parts of the human and other animal bodies to be at once very beautiful, and very well adapted to their purposes; and we are deceived by a sophism, which makes us take that for a cause which is only a concomitant: this is the sophism of the fly; who imagined he raised a great dust, because he stood upon the chariot that really raised it. The stomach, the lungs, the liver, as well as other parts, are incomparably well adapted to their purposes; yet they are far from having any beauty. Again, many things are very beautiful, in which it is impossible to discern any idea of use. And I appeal to the

first and most natural feeling of mankind, whether, on beholding a beautiful eye, or a well-fashioned mouth, or a well-turned leg, any ideas of their being well fitted for seeing, eating, or running, ever present themselves. What idea of use is it that flowers excite, the most beautiful part of the vegetable world? It is true, that the infinitely wise and good Creator has, of his bounty, frequently joined beauty to those things which he has made useful to us: but this does not prove that an idea of use and beauty are the same thing, or that they are any way dependent on each other.

SECT. VII.

THE REAL EFFECTS OF FITNESS.

WHEN I excluded proportion and fitness from any share in beauty, I did not by any means intend to say that they were of no value, or that they ought to be disregarded in works of art. Works of art are the proper sphere of their power; and here it is that they have their full effect. Whenever the wisdom of our Creator intended that we should be affected with any thing, he did not confide the execution of his design to the languid and precarious operation of our reason; but he endued it with powers and properties that prevent the understanding, and even the will; which, seizing upon the senses and imagination, captivate

the soul before the understanding is ready either to join with them, or to oppose them. It is by a long deduction, and much study, that we discover the adorable wisdom of God in his works: when we discover it, the effect is very different, not only in the manner of acquiring it, but in its own nature, from that which strikes us without any preparation from the sublime or the beautiful. How different is the satisfaction of an anatomist, who discovers the use of the muscles and of the skin, the excellent contrivance of the one for the various movements of the body, and the wonderful texture of the other, at once a general covering, and at once a general outlet as well as inlet; how different is this from the affection which possesses an ordinary man at the sight of a delicate, smooth skin, and all the other parts of beauty, which require no investigation to be perceived! In the former case, whilst we look up to the Maker with admiration and praise, the object which causes it may be odious and distasteful; the latter very often so touches us by its power on the imagination, that we examine but little into the artifice of its contrivance; and we have need of a strong effort of our reason to disentangle our minds from the allurements of the object, to a consideration of that wisdom which invented so powerful a machine. The effect of proportion and fitness, at least so far as they proceed from a mere consideration of

of the work itself, produce approbation, the acquiescence of the understanding, but not love, nor any passion of that species. When we examine the structure of a watch, when we come to know thoroughly the use of every part of it, satisfied as we are with the fitness of the whole, we are far enough from perceiving any thing like beauty in the watch-work itself; but let us look on the case, the labour of some curious artist in engraving, with little or no idea of use, we shall have a much livelier idea of beauty than we ever could have had from the watch itself, though the master-piece of Graham. In beauty, as I said, the effect is previous to any knowledge of the use; but to judge of proportion, we must know the end for which any work is designed. According to the end, the proportion varies. Thus there is one proportion of a tower, another of a house; one proportion of a gallery, another of a hall, another of a chamber. To judge of the proportions of these, you must be first acquainted with the purposes for which they were designed. Good sense and experience, acting together, find out what is fit to be done in every work of art. We are rational creatures, and in all our works we ought to regard their end and purpose; the gratification of any passion, how innocent soever, ought only to be of secondary consideration. Herein is placed the real power of fitness and proportion; they

operate on the understanding considering them, which *approves* the work and acquiesces in it. The passions, and the imagination which principally raises them, have here very little to do. When a room appears in its original nakedness, bare walls and a plain ceiling; let its proportion be ever so excellent, it pleases very little; a cold approbation is the utmost we can reach; a much worse proportioned room with elegant mouldings and fine festoons, glasses, and other merely ornamental furniture, will make the imagination revolt against the reason; it will please much more than the naked proportion of the first room, which the understanding has so much approved, as admirably fitted for its purposes. What I have here said and before concerning proportion, is by no means to persuade people absurdly to neglect the idea of use in the works of art. It is only to shew that these excellent things, beauty and proportion, are not the same; not that they should either of them be disregarded.

SECT. VIII.

THE RECAPITULATION.

ON the whole; if such parts in human bodies as are found proportioned, were likewise constantly found beautiful, as they certainly are not; or if they were so situated, as that a pleasure might flow

flow from the comparison, which they seldom are; or if any assignable proportions were found, either in plants or animals, which were always attended with beauty, which never was the case; or, if, where parts were well adapted to their purposes, they were constantly beautiful, and when no use appeared, there was no beauty, which is contrary to all experience; we might conclude, that beauty consisted in proportion or utility. But since, in all respects, the case is quite otherwise; we may be satisfied that beauty does not depend on these, let it owe its origin to what else it will.

SECT. IX.

PERFECTION NOT THE CAUSE OF BEAUTY.

THERE is another notion current, pretty closely allied to the former; that *Perfection* is the constituent cause of beauty. This opinion has been made to extend much further than to sensible objects. But in these, so far is perfection, considered as such, from being the cause of beauty; that this quality, where it is highest, in the female sex, almost always carries with it an idea of weakness and imperfection. Women are very sensible of this; for which reason, they learn to lisp, to totter in their walk, to counterfeit weakness, and even sickness. In all this they are guided by nature. Beauty in distress is much the most affecting beauty.

Blushing has little less power; and modesty in general, which is a tacit allowance of imperfection, is itself considered as an amiable quality, and certainly heightens every other that is so. I know it is in every body's mouth, that we ought to love perfection. This is to me a sufficient proof, that it is not the proper object of love. Who ever said we *ought* to love a fine woman, or even any of these beautiful animals which please us? Here to be affected, there is no need of the concurrence of our will.

SECT. X.

HOW FAR THE IDEA OF BEAUTY MAY BE APPLIED TO THE QUALITIES OF THE MIND.

NOR is this remark in general less applicable to the qualities of the mind. Those virtues which cause admiration, and are of the sublimer kind, produce terrour rather than love; such as fortitude, justice, wisdom, and the like. Never was any man amiable by force of these qualities. Those which engage our hearts, which impress us with a sense of loveliness, are the softer virtues; easiness of temper, compassion, kindness, and liberality; though certainly those latter are of less immediate and momentous concern to society, and of less dignity. But it is for that reason that they are so amiable. The great virtues turn principally

on dangers, punishments, and troubles, and are exercised rather in preventing the worst mischiefs, than in dispensing favours; and are therefore not lovely, though highly venerable. The subordinate turn on reliefs, gratifications, and indulgences; and are therefore more lovely, though inferiour in dignity. Those persons who creep into the hearts of most people, who are chosen as the companions of their softer hours, and their reliefs from care and anxiety, are never persons of shining qualities or strong virtues. It is rather the soft green of the soul on which we rest our eyes, that are fatigued with beholding more glaring objects. It is worth observing how we feel ourselves affected in reading the characters of Cæsar and Cato, as they are so finely drawn and contrasted in Sallust. In one the *ignoscendo largiundo;* in the other, *nil largiundo.* In one, the *miseris perfugium;* in the other, *malis perniciem.* In the latter we have much to admire, much to reverence, and perhaps something to fear; we respect him, but we respect him at a distance. The former makes us familiar with him; we love him, and he leads us whither he pleases. To draw things closer to our first and most natural feelings, I will add a remark made upon reading this section by an ingenious friend. The authority of a father, so useful to our well-being, and so justly venerable upon all accounts, hinders us from having that entire love for him that

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we have for our mothers, where the parental authority is almost melted down into the mother's fondness and indulgence. But we generally have a great love for our grandfathers in whom this authority is removed a degree from us, and where the weakness of age mellows it into something of a feminine partiality.

SECT. XI.

HOW FAR THE IDEA OF BEAUTY MAY BE APPLIED TO VIRTUE.

FROM what has been said in the foregoing section, we may easily see how far the application of beauty to virtue, may be made with propriety. The general application of this quality to virtue, has a strong tendency to confound our ideas of things; and it has given rise to an infinite deal of whimsical theory; as the affixing the name of beauty to proportion, congruity, and perfection, as well as to qualities of things yet more remote from our natural ideas of it, and from one another, has tended to confound our ideas of beauty, and left us no standard or rule to judge by, that was not even more uncertain and fallacious than our own fancies. This loose and inaccurate manner of speaking has therefore misled us both in the theory of taste and of morals; and induced us to remove the science of our duties from their

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proper basis, (our reason, our relations, and our necessities) to rest it upon foundations altogether visionary and unsubstantial.

SECT. XII.

THE REAL CAUSE OF BEAUTY.

HAVING endeavoured to shew what beauty is not, it remains that we should examine, at least with equal attention, in what it really consists. Beauty is a thing much too affecting not to depend upon some positive qualities. And, since it is no creature of our reason, since it strikes us without any reference to use, and even where no use at all can be discerned, since the order and method of nature is generally very different from our measures and proportions, we must conclude that beauty is, for the greater part, some quality in bodies acting mechanically upon the human mind by the intervention of the senses. We ought therefore to consider attentively in what manner those sensible qualities are disposed, in such things as by experience we find beautiful, or which excite in us the passion of love, or some correspondent affection.

SECT. XIII.

BEAUTIFUL OBJECTS SMALL.

THE most obvious point that presents itself to us in examining any object, is its extent or quantity. And what degree of extent prevails in bodies that are held beautiful, may be gathered from the usual manner of expression concerning it. I am told that, in most languages, the objects of love are spoken of under diminutive epithets. It is so in all the languages of which I have any knowledge. In Greek the *ιων* and other diminutive terms are almost always the terms of affection and tenderness. These diminutives were commonly added by the Greeks to the names of persons with whom they conversed on terms of friendship and familiarity. Though the Romans were a people of less quick and delicate feelings, yet they naturally slid into the lessening termination upon the same occasions. Anticntly in the English language the diminishing *ling* was added to the names of persons and things that were the objects of love. Some we retain still, as *darling* (or little dear), and a few others. But, to this day, in ordinary conversation, it is usual to add the endearing name of *little* to every thing we love: the French and Italians make use of these affectionate diminutives even more than we. In the

animal

animal creation, out of our own species, it is the small we are inclined to be fond of; little birds, and some of the smaller kinds of beasts. A great beautiful thing is a manner of expression scarcely ever used; but that of a great ugly thing, is very common. There is a wide difference between admiration and love. The sublime, which is the cause of the former, always dwells on great objects, and terrible; the latter on small ones, and pleasing; we submit to what we admire, but we love what submits to us; in one case we are forced, in the other we are flattered into compliance. In short the ideas of the sublime and the beautiful stand on foundations so different, that it is hard, I had almost said impossible, to think of reconciling them in the same subject, without considerably lessening the effect of the one or the other upon the passions. So that, attending to their quantity, beautiful objects are comparatively small.

SECT. XIV.

SMOOTHNESS.

THE next property constantly observable in such objects is * *Smoothness:* A quality so essential to beauty, that I do not now recollect any thing beautiful that is not smooth. In trees and flowers, smooth leaves are beautiful; smooth slopes of earth in

* Part IV. sect. 21.

in gardens; smooth streams in the landscape; smooth coats of birds and beasts in animal beauties; in fine women, smooth skins; and in several sorts of ornamental furniture, smooth and polished surfaces. A very considerable part of the effect of beauty is owing to this quality; indeed the most considerable. For take any beautiful object, and give it a broken and rugged surface; and however well formed it may be in other respects, it pleases no longer. Whereas, let it want ever so many of the other constituents, if it wants not this, it becomes more pleasing than almost all the others without it. This seems to me so evident, that I am a good deal surprised, that none who have handled the subject have made any mention of the quality of smoothness, in the enumeration of those that go to the forming of beauty. For indeed any ruggedness, any sudden projection, any sharp angle, is in the highest degree contrary to that idea.

SECT. XV.

GRADUAL VARIATION.

BUT as perfectly beautiful bodies are not composed of angular parts, so their parts never continue long in the same right line *. They vary their direction every moment, and they change under

* Part V. sect. 23.

under the eye by a deviation continually carrying on, but for whose beginning or end you will find it difficult to ascertain a point. The view of a beautiful bird will illustrate this observation. Here we see the head increasing insensibly to the middle, from whence it lessens gradually until it mixes with the neck; the neck loses itself in a larger swell, which continues to the middle of the body, when the whole decreases again to the tail; the tail takes a new direction; but it soon varies its new course: it blends again with the other parts; and the line is perpetually changing, above, below, upon every side. In this description I have before me the idea of a dove; it agrees very well with most of the conditions of beauty. It is smooth and downy; its parts are (to use that expression) melted into one another; you are presented with no sudden protuberance through the whole, and yet the whole is continually changing. Observe that part of a beautiful woman where she is perhaps the most beautiful, about the neck and breasts; the smoothness; the softness; the easy and insensible swell; the variety of the surface, which is never for the smallest space the same; the deceitful maze, through which the unsteady eye slides giddily, without knowing where to fix or whither it is carried. Is not this a demonstration of that change of surface, continual, and yet hardly perceptible at any point, which forms one of the great

constituents

constituents of beauty? It gives me no small pleasure to find that I can strengthen my theory in this point, by the opinion of the very ingenious Mr. Hogarth; whose idea of the line of beauty I take in general to be extremely just. But the idea of variation, without attending so accurately to the *manner* of the variation, has led him to consider angular figures as beautiful: these figures, it is true, vary greatly; yet they vary in a sudden and broken manner; and I do not find any natural object which is angular, and at the same time beautiful. Indeed few natural objects are entirely angular. But I think those which approach the most nearly to it are the ugliest. I must add too, that, so far as I could observe of nature, though the varied line is that alone in which complete beauty is found, yet there is no particular line which is always found in the most completely beautiful, and which is therefore beautiful in preference to all other lines. At least I never could observe it.

SECT. XVI.

DELICACY.

AN air of robustness and strength is very prejudicial to beauty. An appearance of *delicacy*, and even of fragility, is almost essential to it. Whoever examines the vegetable or animal creation will

will find this observation to be founded in nature. It is not the oak, the ash, or the elm, or any of the robust trees of the forest, which we consider as beautiful; they are awful and majestick; they inspire a sort of reverence. It is the delicate myrtle, it is the orange, it is the almond, it is the jasmine, it is the vine, which we look on as vegetable beauties. It is the flowery species, so remarkable for its weakness and momentary duration, that gives us the liveliest idea of beauty and elegance. Among animals, the greyhound is more beautiful than the mastiff; and the delicacy of a gennet, a barb, or an Arabian horse, is much more amiable than the strength and stability of some horses of war or carriage. I need here say little of the fair sex, where I believe the point will be easily allowed me. The beauty of women is considerably owing to their weakness or delicacy, and is even enhanced by their timidity, a quality of mind analogous to it. I would not here be understood to say, that weakness betraying very bad health has any share in beauty; but the ill effect of this is not because it is weakness, but because the ill state of health, which produces such weakness, alters the other conditions of beauty; the parts in such a case collapse; the bright colour, the *lumen purpureum juventæ*, is gone; and the fine variation is lost in wrinkles, sudden breaks, and right lines.

SECT. XVII.

BEAUTY IN COLOUR.

AS to the colours usually found in beautiful bodies, it may be somewhat difficult to ascertain them, because, in the several parts of nature, there is an infinite variety. However, even in this variety, we may mark out something on which to settle. First, the colours of beautiful bodies must not be dusky or muddy, but clean and fair. Secondly, they must not be of the strongest kind. Those which seem most appropriated to beauty, are the milder of every sort; light greens; soft blues; weak whites; pink reds; and violets. Thirdly, if the colours be strong and vivid, they are always diversified, and the object is never of one strong colour; there are almost always such a number of them, (as in variegated flowers) that the strength and glare of each is considerably abated. In a fine complexion, there is not only some variety in the colouring, but the colours: neither the red nor the white are strong and glaring. Besides, they are mixed in such a manner, and with such gradations, that it is impossible to fix the bounds. On the same principle it is, that the dubious colour in the necks and tails of peacocks, and about the heads of drakes, is so very agreeable. In reality, the beauty both of shape and

and colouring are as nearly related, as we can well suppose it possible for things of such different natures to be.

SECT. XVIII.

RECAPITULATION.

ON the whole, the qualities of beauty, as they are merely sensible qualities, are the following; First, to be comparatively small. Secondly, to be smooth. Thirdly, to have a variety in the direction of the parts; but, fourthly, to have those parts not angular, but melted as it were into each other. Fifthly, to be of a delicate frame, without any remarkable appearance of strength. Sixthly, to have its colours clear and bright, but not very strong and glaring. Seventhly, or if it should have any glaring colour, to have it diversified with others. These are, I believe, the properties on which beauty depends; properties that operate by nature, and are less liable to be altered by caprice, or confounded by a diversity of tastes, than any other.

SECT. XIX.

THE PHYSIOGNOMY.

THE *Physiognomy* has a considerable share in beauty, especially in that of our own species. The

manners give a certain determination to the countenance; which, being observed to correspond pretty regularly with them, is capable of joining the effect of certain agreeable qualities of the mind to those of the body. So that to form a finished human beauty, and to give it its full influence, the face must be expressive of such gentle and amiable qualities, as correspond with the softness, smoothness, and delicacy of the outward form.

SECT. XX.

THE EYE.

I HAVE hitherto purposely omitted to speak of the *Eye*, which has so great a share in the beauty of the animal creation, as it did not fall so easily under the foregoing heads, though in fact it is reducible to the same principles. I think then, that the beauty of the eye consists, first, in its *clearness*; what *coloured* eye shall please most, depends a good deal on particular fancies; but none are pleased with an eye whose water (to use that term) is dull and muddy*. We are pleased with the eye in this view, on the principle upon which we like diamonds, clear water, glass, and such like transparent substances. Secondly, the motion of the eye contributes to its beauty, by continually shifting its

* Part IV. sect. 25.

its direction; but a slow and languid motion is more beautiful than a brisk one; the latter is enlivening; the former lovely. Thirdly, with regard to the union of the eye with the neighbouring parts, it is to hold the same rule that is given of other beautiful ones; it is not to make a strong deviation from the line of the neighbouring parts; nor to verge into any exact geometrical figure. Besides all this, the eye affects, as it is expressive of some qualities of the mind, and its principal power generally arises from this; so that what we have just said of the physiognomy is applicable here.

SECT. XXI.

UGLINESS.

IT may perhaps appear like a sort of repetition of what we have before said, to insist here upon the nature of *Ugliness;* as I imagine it to be in all respects the opposite to those qualities which we have laid down for the constituents of beauty. But though ugliness be the opposite to beauty, it is not the opposite to proportion and fitness. For it is possible that a thing may be very ugly with any proportions, and with a perfect fitness to any uses. Ugliness I imagine likewise to be consistent enough with an idea of the sublime. But I would by no means insinuate that ugliness of itself is a

sublime idea, unless united with such qualities as excite a strong terrour.

SECT. XXII.

GRACE.

Gracefulness is an idea not very different from beauty; it consists in much the same things. Gracefulness is an idea belonging to *posture* and *motion*. In both these, to be graceful, it is requisite that there be no appearance of difficulty; there is required a small inflection of the body; and a composure of the parts in such a manner, as not to incumber each other, not to appear divided by sharp and sudden angles. In this case, this roundness, this delicacy of attitude and motion, it is that all the magick of grace consists, and what is called its *je ne sçai quoi*; as will be obvious to any observer, who considers attentively the Venus de Medicis, the Antinous, or any statue generally allowed to be graceful in a high degree.

SECT. XXIII.

ELEGANCE AND SPECIOUSNESS.

WHEN any body is composed of parts smooth and polished, without pressing upon each other, without shewing any ruggedness or confusion, and at the same time affecting some *regular shape*, I call

call it *elegant*. It is closely allied to the beautiful, differing from it only in this *regularity;* which, however, as it makes a very material difference in the affection produced, may very well constitute another species. Under this head I rank those delicate and regular works of art, that imitate no determinate object in nature, as elegant buildings, and pieces of furniture. When any object partakes of the above mentioned qualities, or of those of beautiful bodies, and is withal of great dimensions, it is full as remote from the idea of mere beauty; I call it *fine* or *specious*.

SECT. XXIV.

THE BEAUTIFUL IN FEELING.

THE foregoing description of beauty, so far as it is taken in by the eye, may be greatly illustrated by describing the nature of objects, which produce a similar effect through the touch. This I call the beautiful in *Feeling*. It corresponds wonderfully with what causes the same species of pleasure to the sight. There is a chain in all our sensations; they are all but different sorts of feelings calculated to be affected by various sorts of objects, but all to be affected after the same manner. All bodies that are pleasant to the touch, are so by the slightness of the resistance they make. Resistance is either to motion along the surface, or to the

pressure of the parts on one another: if the former be slight, we call the body smooth; if the latter, soft. The chief pleasure we receive by feeling, is in the one or the other of these qualities; and if there be a combination of both, our pleasure is greatly increased. This is so plain, that it is rather more fit to illustrate other things, than to be illustrated itself by an example. The next source of pleasure in this sense, as in every other, is the continually presenting somewhat new; and we find that bodies which continually vary their surface, are much the most pleasant or beautiful to the feeling, as any one that pleases may experience. The third property in such objects is, that though the surface continually varies its direction, it never varies it suddenly. The application of any thing sudden, even though the impression itself have little or nothing of violence, is disagreeable. The quick application of a finger a little warmer or colder than usual, without notice, makes us start; a slight tap on the shoulder, not expected, has the same effect. Hence it is that angular bodies, bodies that suddenly vary the direction of the outline, afford so little pleasure to the feeling. Every such change is a sort of climbing or falling in miniature; so that squares, triangles, and other angular figures, are neither beautiful to the sight nor feeling. Whoever compares his state of mind, on feeling soft, smooth, variated, unangular bodies,

with

with that in which he finds himself, on the view of a beautiful object, will perceive a very striking analogy in the effects of both; and which may go a good way towards discovering their common cause. Feeling and sight, in this respect, differ in but a few points. The touch takes in the pleasure of softness, which is not primarily an object of sight; the sight, on the other hand, comprehends colour, which can hardly be made perceptible to the touch: the touch again has the advantage in a new idea of pleasure resulting from a moderate degree of warmth; but the eye triumphs in the infinite extent and multiplicity of its objects. But there is such a similitude in the pleasures of these senses, that I am apt to fancy, if it were possible that one might discern colour by feeling (as it is said some blind men have done) that the same colours, and the same disposition of colouring, which are found beautiful to the sight, would be found likewise most grateful to the touch. But, setting aside conjectures, let us pass to the other sense; of Hearing.

SECT. XXV.

THE BEAUTIFUL IN SOUNDS.

IN this sense we find an equal aptitude to be affected in a soft and delicate manner; and how far sweet or beautiful sounds agree with our descriptions

descriptions of beauty in other senses, the experience of every one must decide. Milton has described this species of musick in one of his juvenile poems*. I need not say that Milton was perfectly well versed in that art; and that no man had a finer ear, with a happier manner of expressing the affections of one sense by metaphors taken from another. The description is as follows:

> - - - *And ever against eating cares,*
> *Lap me in* soft *Lydian airs;*
> *In notes with many a* winding *bout*
> *Of* linked sweetness long drawn *out;*
> *With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,*
> *The* melting *voice through* mazes *running;*
> Untwisting *all the chains that tie*
> *The hidden soul of harmony.*

Let us parallel this with the softness, the winding surface, the unbroken continuance, the easy gradation of the beautiful in other things; and all the diversities of the several senses, with all their several affections, will rather help to throw lights from one another to finish one clear, consistent idea of the whole, than to obscure it by their intricacy and variety.

To the above-mentioned description I shall add one or two remarks. The first is; that the beautiful in musick will not bear that loudness and strength

* L'Allegro

strength of sounds, which may be used to raise other passions; nor notes which are shrill or harsh, or deep; it agrees best with such as are clear, even, smooth, and weak. The second is; that great variety, and quick transitions from one measure or tone to another, are contrary to the genius of the beautiful in musick. Such * transitions often excite mirth, or other sudden or tumultuous passions; but not that sinking, that melting, that languor, which is the characteristical effect of the beautiful as it regards every sense. The passion excited by beauty is in fact nearer to a species of melancholy, than to jollity and mirth. I do not here mean to confine musick to any one species of notes, or tones, neither is it an art in which I can say I have any great skill. My sole design in this remark is, to settle a consistent idea of beauty. The infinite variety of the affections of the soul will suggest to a good head, and skilful ear, a variety of such sounds as are fitted to raise them. It can be no prejudice to this, to clear and distinguish some few particulars, that belong to the same class, and are consistent with each other, from the immense crowd of different, and sometimes contradictory ideas, that rank vulgarly under the standard of beauty. And of these it is my intention to mark such only of the leading points as

* I ne'er am merry, when I hear sweet musick.

SHAKSPEARE

as shew the conformity of the sense of Hearing with all the other senses, in the article of their pleasures.

SECT. XXVI.

TASTE AND SMELL.

THIS general agreement of the senses is yet more evident on minutely considering those of taste and smell. We metaphorically apply the idea of sweetness to sights and sounds; but as the qualities of bodies by which they are fitted to excite either pleasure or pain in these senses, are not so obvious as they are in the others, we shall refer an explanation of their analogy, which is a very close one, to that part, wherein we come to consider the common efficient cause of beauty, as it regards all the senses. I do not think any thing better fitted to establish a clear and settled idea of visual beauty, than this way of examining the similar pleasures of other senses; for one part is sometimes clear in one of the senses, that is more obscure in another; and where there is a clear concurrence of all, we may with more certainty speak of any one of them. By this means, they bear witness to each other; nature is, as it were, scrutinized; and we report nothing of her but what we receive from her own information.

SECT. XXVII.

THE SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL COMPARED.

ON closing this general view of Beauty, it naturally occurs, that we should compare it with the Sublime; and in this comparison there appears a remarkable contrast. For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small: beauty should be smooth and polished; the great, rugged, and negligent; beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly; the great in many cases loves the right line; and when it deviates, it often makes a strong deviation: beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy: beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive. They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure; and however they may vary afterwards from the direct nature of their causes, yet these causes keep up an eternal distinction between them, a distinction never to be forgotten by any whose business it is to affect the passions. In the infinite variety of natural combinations, we must expect to find the qualities of things the most remote imaginable from each other united in the same object. We must expect also to find combinations of the same kind in the works of

art. But when we consider the power of an object upon our passions, we must know that when any thing is intended to affect the mind by the force of some predominant property, the affection produced is like to be the more uniform and perfect, if all the other properties or qualities of the object be of the same nature, and tending to the same design as the principal.

If black and white blend, soften, and unite
A thousand ways, are there no black and white?

If the qualities of the sublime and eautiful ar e sometimes found united, does this prove that they are the same; does it prove that they are any way allied; does it prove even that they are not opposite and contradictory? Black and white may soften, may blend; but they are not therefore the same. Nor, when they are so softened and blended with each other, or with different colours, is the power of black as black, or of white as white, so strong as when each stands uniform and distinguished.

THE END OF THE THIRD PART.

A PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE

ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS

OF THE

SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL.

PART IV.

SECTION I.

OF THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF THE SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL.

WHEN I say, I intend to enquire into the efficient cause of Sublimity and Beauty, I would not be understood to say, that I can come to the ultimate cause. I do not pretend that I shall ever be able to explain, why certain affections of the body produce such a distinct emotion of mind, and no other; or why the body is at all affected by the mind, or the mind by the body. A little thought will shew this to be impossible. But I conceive, if we can discover what affections of the mind produce certain emotions of the body;

 and

and what distinct feelings and qualities of body shall produce certain determinate passions in the mind, and no others, I fancy a great deal will be done; something not unuseful towards a distinct knowledge of our passions, so far at least as we have them at present under our consideration. This is all, I believe, we can do. If we could advance a step farther, difficulties would still remain, as we should be still equally distant from the first cause. When Newton first discovered the property of attraction, and settled its laws, he found it served very well to explain several of the most remarkable phænomena in nature; but yet with reference to the general system of things, he could consider attraction but as an effect, whose cause at that time he did not attempt to trace. But when he afterwards began to account for it by a subtle elastic æther, this great man (if in so great a man it be not impious to discover any thing like a blemish) seemed to have quitted his usual cautious manner of philosophizing; since, perhaps, allowing all that has been advanced on this subject to be sufficiently proved, I think it leaves us with as many difficulties as it found us. That great chain of causes, which linking one to another even to the throne of God himself, can never be unravelled by any industry of ours. When we go but one step beyond the immediate sensible qualities of things, we go out of our depth. All we do after is but a faint

faint struggle, that shews we are in an element which does not belong to us. So that when I speak of cause, and efficient cause, I only mean certain affections of the mind, that cause certain changes in the body; or certain powers and properties in bodies, that work a change in the mind. As if I were to explain the motion of a body falling to the ground, I would say it was caused by gravity; and I would endeavour to shew after what manner this power operated, without attempting to shew why it operated in this manner: or if I were to explain the effects of bodies striking one another by the common laws of percussion, I should not endeavour to explain how motion itself is communicated.

SECT. II.

ASSOCIATION.

IT is no small bar in the way of our enquiry into the cause of our passions, that the occasions of many of them are given, and that their governing motions are communicated at a time when we have not capacity to reflect on them; at a time of which all sort of memory is worn out of our minds. For besides such things as affect us in various manners, according to their natural powers, there are associations made at that early season, which we find it very hard afterwards to

 distinguish

distinguish from natural effects. Not to mention the unaccountable antipathies which we find in many persons, we all find it impossible to remember when a steep became more terrible than a plain; or fire or water more terrible than a clod of earth; though all these are very probably either conclusions from experience, or arising from the premonitions of others; and some of them impressed, in all likelihood, pretty late. But as it must be allowed that many things affect us after a certain manner, not by any natural powers they have for that purpose, but by association; so it would be absurd, on the other hand, to say that all things affect us by association only; since some things must have been originally and naturally agreeable or disagreeable, from which the others derive their associated powers; and it would be, I fancy, to little purpose to look for the cause of our passions in association, until we fail of it in the natural properties of things.

SECT. III.

CAUSE OF PAIN AND FEAR.

I HAVE before observed*, that whatever is qualified to cause terrour is a foundation capable of the sublime; to which I add, that not only these, but many things from which we cannot probably apprehend any danger, have a similar effect,

* Part I. sect. 8.

effect, because they operate in a similar manner. I observed too*, that whatever produces pleasure, positive and original pleasure, is fit to have beauty engrafted on it. Therefore, to clear up the nature of these qualities, it may be necessary to explain the nature of pain and pleasure on which they depend. A man who suffers under violent bodily pain, (I suppose the most violent, because the effect may be the more obvious;) I say a man in great pain has his teeth set, his eye-brows are violently contracted, his forehead is wrinkled, his eyes are dragged inwards, and rolled with great vehemence, his hair stands on end, the voice is forced out in short shrieks and groans, and the whole fabrick totters. Fear, or terrour, which is an apprehension of pain or death, exhibits exactly the same effects, approaching in violence to those just mentioned, in proportion to the nearness of the cause, and the weakness of the subject. This is not only so in the human species: but I have more than once observed in dogs, under an apprehension of punishment, that they have writhed their bodies, and yelped, and howled, as if they had actually felt the blows. From hence I conclude, that pain and fear act upon the same parts of the body, and in the same manner, though somewhat differing in degree: that pain and fear consist in an unnatural tension of the nerves; that this is sometimes

* Part I. sect. 10.

sometimes accompanied with an unnatural strength, which sometimes suddenly changes into an extraordinary weakness; that these effects often come on alternately, and are sometimes mixed with each other. This is the nature of all convulsive agitations, especially in weaker subjects, which are the most liable to the severest impressions of pain and fear. The only difference between pain and terrour is, that things which cause pain operate on the mind by the intervention of the body; whereas things that cause terrour generally affect the bodily organs by the operation of the mind suggesting the danger; but not agreeing, either primarily, or secondarily, in producing a tension, contraction, or violent emotion of the nerves*, they agree likewise in every thing else. For it appears very clearly to me, from this, as well as from many other examples, that when the body is disposed, by any means whatsoever, to such emotions as it would acquire by the means of a certain passion; it will of itself excite something very like that passion in the mind.

* I do not here enter into the question debated among physiologists, whether pain be the effect of a contraction, or a tension of the nerves. Either will serve my purpose; for by tension, I mean no more than a violent pulling of the fibres, which compose any muscle or membrane, in whatever way this is done.

SECT. IV.

CONTINUED.

TO this purpose Mr. Spon, in his Récherches d'Antiquité, gives us a curious story of the cele brated physiognomist Campanella. This man, it seems, had not only made very accurate observations on human faces, but was very expert in mimicking such as were any way remarkable. When he had a mind to penetrate into the inclinations of those he had to deal with, he composed his face, his gesture, and his whole body, as nearly as he could into the exact similitude of the person he intended to examine; and then carefully observed what turn of mind he seemed to acquire by this change. So that, says my author, he was able to enter into the dispositions and thoughts of people as effectually as if he had been changed into the very men. I have often observed, that on mimicking the looks and gestures of angry, or placid, or frighted, or daring men, I have involuntarily found my mind turned to that passion, whose appearance I endeavoured to imitate; nay, I am convinced it is hard to avoid it, though one strove to separate the passion from its correspondent gestures. Our minds and bodies are so closely and intimately connected, that one is incapable of pain or pleasure without the other. Campanella, of

 whom

whom we have been speaking, could so abstract his attention from any sufferings of his body, that he was able to endure the rack itself without much pain; and in lesser pains every body must have observed, that, when we can employ our attention on any thing else, the pain has been for a time suspended: on the other hand, if by any means the body is indisposed to perform such gestures, or to be stimulated into such emotions as any passion usually produces in it, that passion itself never can arise, though its cause should be never so strongly in action; though it should be merely mental, and immediately affecting none of the senses. As an opiate, or spirituous liquors, shall suspend the operation of grief, or fear, or anger, in spite of all our efforts to the contrary; and this by inducing in the body a disposition contrary to that which it receives from these passions.

SECT. V.

HOW THE SUBLIME IS PRODUCED.

HAVING considered terrour as producing an unnatural tension and certain violent emotions of the nerves; it easily follows, from what we have just said, that whatever is fitted to produce such a tension must be productive of a passion similar to terrour *, and consequently must be a source of the sublime,

* Part II. sect. 2.

sublime, though it should have no idea of danger connected with it. So that little remains towards shewing the cause of the sublime, but to shew that the instances we have given of it in the second part relate to such things, as are fitted by nature to produce this sort of tension, either by the primary operation of the mind or the body. With regard to such things as affect by the associated idea of danger, there can be no doubt but that they produce terrour, and act by some modification of that passion; and that terrour, when sufficiently violent, raises the emotions of the body just mentioned, can as little be doubted. But if the sublime is built on terrour, or some passion like it, which has pain for its object, it is previously proper to enquire how any species of delight can be derived from a cause so apparently contrary to it. I say *delight*, because, as I have often remarked, it is very evidently different in its cause, and in its own nature, from actual and positive pleasure.

SECT. VI.

HOW PAIN CAN BE A CAUSE OF DELIGHT.

PROVIDENCE has so ordered it, that a state of rest and inaction, however it may flatter our indolence, should be productive of many inconveniences; that it should generate such dis-

orders, as may force us to have recourse to some labour, as a thing absolutely requisite to make us pass our lives with tolerable satisfaction; for the nature of rest is to suffer all the parts of our bodies to fall into a relaxation, that not only disables the members from performing their functions, but takes away the vigorous tone of fibre which is requisite for carrying on the natural and necessary secretions. At the same time, that in this languid, inactive state, the nerves are more liable to the most horrid convulsions, than when they are sufficiently braced and strengthened. Melancholy, dejection, despair, and often self-murder, is the consequence of the gloomy view we take of things in this relaxed state of body. The best remedy for all these evils is exercise or *labour;* and labour is a surmounting of *difficulties*, an exertion of the contracting power of the muscles; and as such resembles pain, which consists in tension or contraction, in every thing but degree. Labour is not only requisite to preserve the coarser organs in a state fit for their functions; but it is equally necessary to these finer and more delicate organs, on which, and by which, the imagination and perhaps the other mental powers act. Since it is probable, that not only the inferiour parts of the soul, as the passions are called, but the understanding itself makes use of some fine corporeal instruments in its operation; though what they are, and where they

they are, may be somewhat hard to settle: but that it does make use of such, appears from hence; that a long exercise of the mental powers induces a remarkable lassitude of the whole body; and on the other hand, that great bodily labour, or pain, weakens and sometimes actually destroys the mental faculties. Now, as a due exercise is essential to the coarse muscular parts of the constitution, and that without this rousing they would become languid and diseased, the very same rule holds with regard to those finer parts we have mentioned; to have them in proper order, they must be shaken and worked to a proper degree.

SECT. VII.

EXERCISE NECESSARY FOR THE FINER ORGANS.

AS common labour, which is a mode of pain, is the exercise of the grosser, a mode of terrour is the exercise of the finer parts of the system; and if a certain mode of pain be of such a nature as to act upon the eye or the ear, as they are the most delicate organs, the affection approaches more nearly to that which has a mental cause. In all these cases, if the pain and terrour are so modified as not to be actually noxious; if the pain is not carried to violence, and the terrour is not conversant about the present destruction of the person, as these emotions clear the parts, whether fine or

gross,

gross, of a dangerous and troublesome incumbrance, they are capable of producing delight; not pleasure, but a sort of delightful horrour, a sort of tranquillity tinged with terrour; which, as it belongs to self-preservation, is one of the strongest of all the passions. Its object is the sublime*. Its highest degree I call *astonishment;* the subordinate degrees are awe, reverence, and respect, which, by the very etymology of the words, shew from what source they are derived, and how they stand distinguished from positive pleasure.

SECT. VIII.

WHY THINGS NOT DANGEROUS PRODUCE A PASSION LIKE TERROUR.

† A MODE of terrour or pain is always the cause of the sublime. For terrour, or associated danger, the foregoing explication is, I believe, sufficient. It will require something more trouble to shew, that such examples as I have given of the sublime in the second part are capable of producing a mode of pain, and of being thus allied to terrour, and to be accounted for on the same principles. And first of such objects as are great in their dimensions. I speak of visual objects.

* Part II. sect. 2. † Part I. sect. 7. Part II. sect. 2.

SECT. IX.

WHY VISUAL OBJECTS OF GREAT DIMENSIONS ARE SUBLIME.

VISION is performed by having a picture, formed by the rays of light which are reflected from the object, painted in one piece, instantaneously, on the retina, or last nervous part of the eye. Or, according to others, there is but one point of any object painted on the eye in such a manner as to be perceived at once; but by moving the eye, we gather up, with great celerity, the several parts of the object, so as to form one uniform piece. If the former opinion be allowed, it will be considered*, that though all the light reflected from a large body should strike the eye in one instant; yet we must suppose that the body itself is formed of a vast number of distinct points, every one of which, or the ray from every one, makes an impression on the retina. So that, though the image of one point should cause but a small tension of this membrane, another, and another, and another stroke, must in their progress cause a very great one, until it arrives at last to the highest degree; and the whole capacity of the eye, vibrating in all its parts, must approach near to the nature of what causes pain, and consequently must produce an idea

* Part II. sect. 7.

idea of the sublime. Again, if we take it, that one point only of an object is distinguishable at once; the matter will amount nearly to the same thing, or rather it will make the origin of the sublime from greatness of dimension yet clearer. For if but one point is observed at once, the eye must traverse the vast space of such bodies with great quickness, and consequently the fine nerves and muscles destined to the motion of that part must be very much strained; and their great sensibility must make them highly affected by this straining. Besides, it signifies just nothing to the effect produced, whether a body has its parts connected and makes its impression at once; or, making but one impression of a point at a time, it causes a succession of the same or others so quickly as to make them seem united; as is evident from the common effect of whirling about a lighted torch or piece of wood: which, if done with celerity, seems a circle of fire.

SECT. X.

UNITY WHY REQUISITE TO VASTNESS.

IT may be objected to this theory, that the eye generally receives an equal number of rays at all times, and that therefore a great object cannot affect it by the number of rays, more than that variety of objects which the eye must always discern

whilst

whilst it remains open. But to this I answer, that admitting an equal number of rays, or an equal quantity of luminous particles to strike the eye at all times, yet if these rays frequently vary their nature, now to blue, now to red, and so on, or their manner of termination, as to a number of petty squares, triangles, or the like, at every change, whether of colour or shape, the organ has a sort of relaxation or rest; but this relaxation and labour so often interrupted, is by no means productive of ease; neither has it the effect of vigorous and uniform labour. Whoever has remarked the different effects of some strong exercise, and some little piddling action, will understand why a teasing, fretful employment, which at once wearies and weakens the body, should have nothing great; these sorts of impulses, which are rather teasing than painful, by continually and suddenly altering their tenour and direction, prevent that full tension, that species of uniform labour, which is allied to strong pain, and causes the sublime. The sum total of things of various kinds, though it should equal the number of the uniform parts composing some *one* entire object, is not equal in its effect upon the organs of our bodies. Besides the one already assigned, there is another very strong reason for the difference. The mind in reality hardly ever can attend diligently to more than one thing at a time; if this thing be little, the effect is little, and

a number

a number of other little objects cannot engage the attention; the mind is bounded by the bounds of the object; and what is not attended to, and what does not exist, are much the same in the effect; but the eye, or the mind, (for in this case there is no difference) in great, uniform objects, does not readily arrive at its bounds; it has no rest, whilst it contemplates them; the image is much the same every where. So that every thing great by its quantity must necessarily be one, simple and entire.

SECT. XI.

THE ARTIFICIAL INFINITE.

WE have observed, that a species of greatness arises from the artificial infinite; and that this infinite consists in an uniform succession of great parts: we observed too, that the same uniform succession had a like power in sounds. But because the effects of many things are clearer in one of the senses than in another, and that all the senses bear analogy to, and illustrate one another, I shall begin with this power in sounds, as the cause of the sublimity from succession is rather more obvious in the sense of hearing. And I shall here, once for all, observe, that an investigation of the natural and mechanical causes of our passions, besides the curiosity of the subject, gives, if they are disco-

vered, a double strength and lustre to any rules we deliver on such matters. When the ear receives any simple sound, it is struck by a single pulse of the air, which makes the ear-drum and the other membranous parts vibrate according to the nature and species of the stroke. If the stroke be strong, the organ of hearing suffers a considerable degree of tension. If the stroke be repeated pretty soon after, the repetition causes an expectation of another stroke. And it must be observed, that expectation itself causes a tension. This is apparent in many animals, who, when they prepare for hearing any sound, rouse themselves, and prick up their ears: so that here the effect of the sounds is considerably augmented by a new auxiliary, the expectation. But though after a number of strokes, we expect still more, not being able to ascertain the exact time of their arrival, when they arrive, they produce a sort of surprise, which increases this tension yet further. For I have observed, that when at any time I have waited very earnestly for some sound, that returned at intervals, (as the successive firing of cannon) though I fully expected the return of the sound, when it came it always made me start a little; the ear-drum suffered a convulsion, and the whole body consented with it. The tension of the part thus increasing at every blow, by the united forces of the stroke itself, the expectation, and the surprise,

it

it is worked up to such a pitch as to be capable of the sublime; it is brought just to the verge of pain. Even when the cause has ceased, the organs of hearing being often successively struck in a similar manner, continue to vibrate in that manner for some time longer; this is an additional help to the greatness of the effect.

SECT. XII.

THE VIBRATIONS MUST BE SIMILAR.

BUT if the vibration be not similar at every impression, it can never be carried beyond the number of actual impressions; for, move any body as a pendulum, in one way, and it will continue to oscillate in an arch of the same circle, until the known causes make it rest; but if after first putting it in motion in one direction, you push it into another, it can never reassume the first direction; because it can never move itself, and consequently it can have but the effect of that last motion; whereas, if in the same direction you act upon it several times, it will describe a greater arch, and move a longer time.

SECT. XIII.

THE EFFECTS OF SUCCESSION IN VISUAL OBJECTS EXPLAINED.

IF we can comprehend clearly how things operate upon one of our senses, there can be very little difficulty in conceiving in what manner they affect the rest. To say a great deal therefore upon the corresponding affections of every sense, would tend rather to fatigue us by an useless repetition, than to throw any new light upon the subject by that ample and diffuse manner of treating it; but as in this discourse we chiefly attach ourselves to the sublime, as it affects the eye, we shall consider particularly why a successive disposition of uniform parts in the same right line should be sublime*, and upon what principle this disposition is enabled to make a comparatively small quantity of matter produce a grander effect, than a much larger quantity disposed in another manner. To avoid the perplexity of general notions; let us set before our eyes a colonnade of uniform pillars planted in a right line; let us take our stand in such a manner, that the eye may shoot along this colonnade, for it has its best effect in this view. In our present situation it is plain, that the rays from the first round pillar will cause in the eye a vibration of that

* Part II. sect. 10.

that species; an image of the pillar itself. The pillar immediately succeeding increases it; that which follows renews and enforces the impression; each in its order as it succeeds, repeats impulse after impulse, and stroke after stroke, until the eye, long exercised in one particular way, cannot lose that object immediately; and, being violently roused by this continued agitation, it presents the mind with a grand or sublime conception. But instead of viewing a rank of uniform pillars; let us suppose that they succeed each other, a round and a square one alternately. In this case the vibration caused by the first round pillar perishes as soon as it is formed; and one of quite another sort (the square) directly occupies its place; which however it resigns as quickly to the round one; and thus the eye proceeds, alternately, taking up one image, and laying down another, as long as the building continues. From whence it is obvious, that, at the last pillar, the impression is as far from continuing as it was at the very first; because, in fact, the sensory can receive no distinct impression but from the last; and it can never of itself resume a dissimilar impression: besides every variation of the object is a rest and relaxation to the organs of sight; and these reliefs prevent that powerful emotion so necessary to produce the sublime. To produce therefore a perfect grandeur in such things as we have been mentioning, there should be a perfect simplicity,

an absolute uniformity in disposition, shape, and colouring. Upon this principle of succession and uniformity it may be asked, why a long bare wall should not be a more sublime object than a colonnade; since the succession is no way interrupted; since the eye meets no check; since nothing more uniform can be conceived? A long bare wall is certainly not so grand an object as a colonnade of the same length and height. It is not altogether difficult to account for this difference. When we look at a naked wall, from the evenness of the object, the eye runs along its whole space, and arrives quickly at its termination; the eye meets nothing which may interrupt its progress; but then it meets nothing which may detain it a proper time to produce a very great and lasting effect. The view of a bare wall, if it be of a great height and length, is undoubtedly grand; but this is only *one* idea, and not a *repetition* of *similar* ideas: it is therefore great, not so much upon the principle of *infinity*, as upon that of *vastness*. But we are not so powerfully affected with any one impulse, unless it be one of a prodigious force indeed, as we are with a succession of similar impulses; because the nerves of the sensory do not (if I may use the expression) acquire a habit of repeating the same feeling in such a manner as to continue it longer than its cause is in action; besides all the effects which I have attributed to

expectation and surprise in Sect. 11, can have no place in a bare wall.

SECT. XIV.

LOCKE'S OPINION CONCERNING DARKNESS CONSIDERED.

IT is Mr. Locke's opinion, that darkness is not naturally an idea of terrour; and that, though an excessive light is painful to the sense, the greatest excess of darkness is no ways troublesome. He observes indeed in another place, that a nurse or an old woman having once associated the ideas of ghosts and goblins with that of darkness, night, ever after, becomes painful and horrible to the imagination. The authority of this great man is doubtless as great as that of any man can be, and it seems to stand in the way of our general principle*. We have considered darkness as a cause of the sublime; and we have all along considered the sublime as depending on some modification of pain or terrour: so that if darkness be no way painful or terrible to any, who have not had their minds early tainted with superstitions, it can be no source of the sublime to them. But, with all deference to such an authority, it seems to me, that an association of a more general nature, an association which takes in all mankind, may make darkness

* Part II. sect. 3

darkness terrible; for in utter darkness it is impossible to know in what degree of safety we stand; we are ignorant of the objects that surround us; we may every moment strike against some dangerous obstruction; we may fall down a precipice the first step we take; and if an enemy approach, we know not in what quarter to defend ourselves; in such a case strength is no sure protection; wisdom can only act by guess; the boldest are staggered, and he, who would pray for nothing else towards his defence, is forced to pray for light.

> *Ζευ πατερ, αλλα συ ρυσαι υπ' ηερος υιας Αχαιων·*
> *Ποιησον δ' αιθρην, δος δ' οφθαλμοισιν ιδεσθαι·*
> *Εν δε φαει και ολεσσον.* - - -

As to the association of ghosts and goblins; surely it is more natural to think, that darkness, being originally an idea of terrour, was chosen as a fit scene for such terrible representations, than that such representations have made darkness terrible. The mind of man very easily slides into an errour of the former sort; but it is very hard to imagine, that the effect of an idea so universally terrible in all times, and in all countries, as darkness, could possibly have been owing to a set of idle stories, or to any cause of a nature so trivial, and of an operation so precarious.

SECT. XV.

DARKNESS TERRIBLE IN ITS OWN NATURE.

PERHAPS it may appear on enquiry, that blackness and darkness are in some degree painful by their natural operation, independent of any associations whatsoever. I must observe, that the ideas of darkness and blackness are much the same; and they differ only in this, that blackness is a more confined idea. Mr. Cheselden has given us a very curious story of a boy, who had been born blind, and continued so until he was thirteen or fourteen years old; he was then couched for a cataract, by which operation he received his sight. Among many remarkable particulars that attended his first perceptions and judgments on visual objects, Cheselden tells us, that the first time the boy saw a black object, it gave him great uneasiness; and that some time after, upon accidentally seeing a negro woman, he was struck with great horrour at the sight. The horrour, in this case, can scarcely be supposed to arise from any association. The boy appears by the account to have been particularly observing and sensible for one of his age; and therefore it is probable, if the great uneasiness he felt at the first sight of black had arisen from its connexion with any other disagreeable ideas, he would have observed and mentioned it. For an

idea,

idea, disagreeable only by association, has the cause of its ill effect on the passions evident enough at the first impression; in ordinary cases, it is indeed frequently lost; but this is, because the original association was made very early, and the consequent impression repeated often. In our instance, there was no time for such a habit; and there is no reason to think that the ill effects of black on his imagination were more owing to its connexion with any disagreeable ideas, than that the good effects of more cheerful colours were derived from their connexion with pleasing ones. They had both probably their effects from their natural operation.

SECT. XVI.

WHY DARKNESS IS TERRIBLE.

IT may be worth while to examine how darkness can operate in such a manner as to cause pain. It is observable, that still as we recede from the light, nature has so contrived it, that the pupil is enlarged by the retiring of the iris, in proportion to our recess. Now, instead of declining from it but a little, suppose that we withdraw entirely from the light; it is reasonable to think, that the contraction of the radial fibres of the iris is proportionably greater; and that this part may by great darkness come to be so contracted, as to

strain the nerves that compose it beyond their natural tone; and by this means to produce a painful sensation. Such a tension it seems there certainly is, whilst we are involved in darkness; for in such a state whilst the eye remains open, there is a continual nisus to receive light; this is manifest from the flashes and luminous appearances which often seem in these circumstances to play before it; and which can be nothing but the effect of spasms, produced by its own efforts in pursuit of its object: several other strong impulses will produce the idea of light in the eye, besides the substance of light itself, as we experience on many occasions. Some, who allow darkness to be a cause of the sublime, would infer, from the dilatation of the pupil, that a relaxation may be productive of the sublime, as well as a convulsion: but they do not, I believe, consider that although the circular ring of the iris be in some sense a sphincter, which may possibly be dilated by a simple relaxation, yet in one respect it differs from most of the other sphincters of the body, that it is furnished with antagonist muscles, which are the radial fibres of the iris: no sooner does the circular muscle begin to relax, than these fibres, wanting their counterpoise, are forcibly drawn back, and open the pupil to a considerable wideness. But though we were not apprized of this, I believe any one will find, if he opens his eyes and makes

an effort to see in a dark place, that a very perceivable pain ensues. And I have heard some ladies remark, that after having worked a long time upon a ground of black, their eyes were so pained and weakened, they could hardly see. It may perhaps be objected to this theory of the mechanical effect of darkness, that the ill effects of darkness or blackness seem rather mental than corporeal: and I own it is true, that they do so; and so do all those that depend on the affections of the finer parts of our system. The ill effects of bad weather appear often no otherwise, than in a melancholy and dejection of spirits; though without doubt, in this case, the bodily organs suffer first, and the mind through these organs.

SECT. XVII.

THE EFFECTS OF BLACKNESS.

BLACKNESS is but a *partial darkness;* and therefore it derives some of its powers from being mixed and surrounded with coloured bodies. In its own nature, it cannot be considered as a colour. Black bodies, reflecting none, or but a few rays, with regard to sight, are but as so many vacant spaces dispersed among the objects we view. When the eye lights on one of these vacuities, after having been kept in some degree of tension by the play of the adjacent colours upon it, it suddenly falls

into a relaxation; out of which it as suddenly recovers by a convulsive spring. To illustrate this: let us consider, that when we intend to sit on a chair, and find it much lower than was expected, the shock is very violent; much more violent than could be thought from so slight a fall as the difference between one chair and another can possibly make. If, after descending a flight of stairs, we attempt inadvertently to take another step in the manner of the former ones, the shock is extremely rude and disagreeable: and by no art can we cause such a shock by the same means when we expect and prepare for it. When I say that this is owing to having the change made contrary to expectation; I do not mean solely, when the *mind* expects. I mean likewise, that when any organ of sense is for some time affected in some one manner, if it be suddenly affected otherwise, there ensues a convulsive motion; such a convulsion as is caused when any thing happens against the expectance of the mind. And though it may appear strange that such a change as produces a relaxation should immediately produce a sudden convulsion; it is yet most certainly so, and so in all the senses. Every one knows that sleep is a relaxation; and that silence, where nothing keeps the organs of hearing in action, is in general fittest to bring on this relaxation; yet when a sort of murmuring sounds dispose a man to sleep, let these sounds cease

suddenly.

suddenly, and the person immediately awakes; that is, the parts are braced up suddenly, and he awakes. This I have often experienced myself, and I have heard the same from observing persons. In like manner, if a person in broad day-light were falling asleep, to introduce a sudden darkness would prevent his sleep for that time, though silence and darkness in themselves, and not suddenly introduced, are very favourable to it. This I knew only by conjecture on the analogy of the senses when I first digested these observations; but I have since experienced it. And I have often experienced, and so have a thousand others, that on the first inclining towards sleep, we have been suddenly awakened with a most violent start; and that this start was generally preceded by a sort of dream of our falling down a precipice: whence does this strange motion arise, but from the too sudden relaxation of the body, which by some mechanism in nature restores itself by as quick and vigorous an exertion of the contracting power of the muscles! The dream itself is caused by this relaxation: and it is of too uniform a nature to be attributed to any other cause. The parts relax too suddenly, which is in the nature of falling; and this accident of the body induces this image in the mind. When we are in a confirmed state of health and vigour, as all changes are then less sudden, and less on the extreme, we can seldom complain of this disagreeable sensation.

SECT. XVIII.

THE EFFECTS OF BLACKNESS MODERATED.

THOUGH the effects of black be painful originally, we must not think they always continue so. Custom reconciles us to every thing. After we have been used to the sight of black objects, the terrour abates, and the smoothness and glossiness, or some agreeable accident of bodies so coloured, softens in some measure the horrour and sternness of their original nature; yet the nature of the original impression still continues. Black will always have something melancholy in it, because the sensory will always find the change to it from other colours too violent; or if it occupy the whole compass of the sight, it will then be darkness; and what was said of darkness will be applicable here. I do not purpose to go into all that might be said to illustrate this theory of the effects of light and darkness; neither will I examine all the different effects produced by the various modifications and mixtures of these two causes. If the foregoing observations have any foundation in nature, I conceive them very sufficient to account for all the phenomena that can arise from all the combinations of black with other colours. To enter into every particular, or to answer every objection, would be an endless labour.

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We have only followed the most leading roads; and we shall observe the same conduct in our enquiry into the cause of beauty.

SECT. XIX.

THE PHYSICAL CAUSE OF LOVE.

WHEN we have before us such objects as excite love and complacency; the body is affected, so far as I could observe, much in the following manner: The head reclines something on one side; the eyelids are more closed than usual, and the eyes roll gently with an inclination to the object; the mouth is a little opened, and the breath drawn slowly, with now and then a low sigh; the whole body is composed, and the hands fall idly to the sides. All this is accompanied with an inward sense of melting and languor. These appearances are always proportioned to the degree of beauty in the object, and of sensibility in the observer. And this gradation from the highest pitch of beauty and sensibility, even to the lowest of mediocrity and indifference, and their correspondent effects, ought to be kept in view, else this description will seem exaggerated, which it certainly is not. But from this description it is almost impossible not to conclude, that beauty acts by relaxing the solids of the whole system. There are all the appearances of such a relaxation; and a relaxation

somewhat

somewhat below the natural tone seems to me to be the cause of all positive pleasure. Who is a stranger to that manner of expression so common in all times and in all countries, of being softened, relaxed, enervated, dissolved, melted away by pleasure? The universal voice of mankind, faithful to their feelings, concurs in affirming this uniform and general effect: and although some odd and particular instance may perhaps be found, wherein there appears a considerable degree of positive pleasure, without all the characters of relaxation, we must not therefore reject the conclusion we had drawn from a concurrence of many experiments; but we must still retain it, subjoining the exceptions which may occur according to the judicious rule laid down by Sir Isaac Newton in the third book of his Opticks. Our position will, I conceive, appear confirmed beyond any reasonable doubt, if we can shew that such things as we have already observed to be the genuine constituents of beauty have each of them, separately taken, a natural tendency to relax the fibres. And if it must be allowed us, that the appearance of the human body, when all these constituents are united together before the sensory, further favours this opinion, we may venture, I believe, to conclude, that the passion called love is produced by this relaxation. By the same method of reasoning which we have used in the enquiry into

the causes of the sublime, we may likewise conclude, that as a beautiful object presented to the sense, by causing a relaxation of the body, produces the passion of love in the mind; so if by any means the passion should first have its origin in the mind, a relaxation of the outward organs will as certainly ensue in a degree proportioned to the cause.

SECT. XX.

WHY SMOOTHNESS IS BEAUTIFUL.

IT is to explain the true cause of visual beauty, that I call in the assistance of the other senses. If it appears that *smoothness* is a principal cause of pleasure to the touch, taste, smell, and hearing, it will be easily admitted a constituent of visual beauty; especially as we have before shewn, that this quality is found almost without exception in all bodies that are by general consent held beautiful. There can be no doubt that bodies which are rough and angular, rouse and vellicate the organs of feeling, causing a sense of pain, which consists in the violent tension or contraction of the muscular fibres. On the contrary, the application of smooth bodies relaxes; gentle stroking with a smooth hand allays violent pains and cramps, and relaxes the suffering parts from their unnatural tension; and it has therefore very often no mean effect in removing

removing swellings and obstructions. The sense of feeling is highly gratified with smooth bodies. A bed smoothly laid, and soft, that is, where the resistance is every way inconsiderable, is a great luxury, disposing to an universal relaxation, and inducing beyond any thing else that species of it called sleep.

SECT. XXI.

SWEETNESS, ITS NATURE.

NOR is it only in the touch, that smooth bodies cause positive pleasure by relaxation. In the smell and taste, we find all things agreeable to them, and which are commonly called sweet, to be of a smooth nature, and that they all evidently tend to relax their respective sensories. Let us first consider the taste. Since it is most easy to enquire into the property of liquids, and since all things seem to want a fluid vehicle to make them tasted at all, I intend rather to consider the liquid than the solid parts of our food. The vehicles of all tastes are *water* and *oil*. And what determines the taste is some salt, which affects variously according to its nature, or its manner of being combined with other things. Water and oil, simply considered, are capable of giving some pleasure to the taste. Water, when simple, is insipid, inodorous, colourless, and smooth; it is found, when *not cold*,

to

to be a great resolver of spasms, and lubricator of the fibres; this power it probably owes to its smoothness. For as fluidity depends, according to the most general opinion, on the roundness, smoothness, and weak cohesion of the component parts of any body; and as water acts merely as a simple fluid; it follows, that the cause of its fluidity is likewise the cause of its relaxing quality; namely, the smoothness and slippery texture of its parts. The other fluid vehicle of tastes is *oil*. This too, when simple, is insipid, inodorous, colourless, and smooth to the touch and taste. It is smoother than water, and in many cases yet more relaxing. Oil is in some degree pleasant to the eye, the touch, and the taste, insipid as it is. Water is not so grateful; which I do not know on what principle to account for, other than that water is not so soft and smooth. Suppose that to this oil or water were added a certain quantity of a specifick salt, which had a power of putting the nervous papillæ of the tongue into a gentle vibratory motion; as suppose sugar dissolved in it. The smoothness of the oil and the vibratory power of the salt cause the sense we call sweetness. In all sweet bodies, sugar, or a substance very little different from sugar, is constantly found. Every species of salt, examined by the microscope, has its own distinct, regular, invariable form. That of nitre is a pointed oblong; that of sea-salt an exact

cube; that of sugar a perfect globe. If you have tried how smooth globular bodies, as the marbles with which boys amuse themselves, have affected the touch when they are rolled backward and forward and over one another, you will easily conceive how sweetness, which consists in a salt of such nature, affects the taste; for a single globe, (though somewhat pleasant to the feeling) yet by the regularity of its form, and the somewhat too sudden deviation of its parts from a right line, is nothing near so pleasant to the touch as several globes, where the hand gently rises to one and falls to another; and this pleasure is greatly increased if the globes are in motion, and sliding over one another; for this soft variety prevents that weariness, which the uniform disposition of the several globes would otherwise produce. Thus in sweet liquors, the parts of the fluid vehicle, though most probably round, are yet so minute, as to conceal the figure of their component parts from the nicest inquisition of the microscope; and consequently, being so excessively minute, they have a sort of flat simplicity to the taste, resembling the effects of plain smooth bodies to the touch; for if a body be composed of round parts excessively small, and packed pretty closely together, the surface will be both to the sight and touch as if it were nearly plain and smooth. It is clear from their unveiling their figure to the microscope, that the particles of sugar

are

are considerably larger than those of water or oil, and consequently, that their effects from their roundness will be more distinct and palpable to the nervous papillæ of that nice organ the tongue: they will induce that sense called sweetness, which in a weak manner we discover in oil, and in a yet weaker in water; for, insipid as they are, water and oil are in some degree sweet; and it may be observed, that insipid things of all kinds approach more nearly to the nature of sweetness than to that of any other taste.

SECT. XXII.

SWEETNESS RELAXING.

IN the other senses we have remarked, that smooth things are relaxing. Now it ought to appear that sweet things, which are the smooth of taste, are relaxing too. It is remarkable, that in some languages soft and sweet have but one name. *Doux* in French signifies soft as well as sweet. The Latin *Dulcis*, and the Italian *Dolce*, have in many cause the same double signification. That sweet things are generally relaxing, is evident; because all such, especially those which are most oily, taken frequently, or in a large quantity, very much enfeeble the tone of the stomach. Sweet smells, which bear a great affinity to sweet tastes, relax very remarkably. The smell of flowers disposes

people to drowsiness; and this relaxing effect is further apparent from the prejudice which people of weak nerves receive from their use. It were worth while to examine, whether tastes of this kind, sweet ones, tastes that are caused by smooth oils and a relaxing salt, are not the originally pleasant tastes. For many, which use has rendered such, were not at all agreeable at first. The way to examine this, is to try what nature has naturally provided for us, which she has undoubtedly made originally pleasant; and to analyse this provision. *Milk* is the first support of our childhood. The component parts of this are water, oil, and a sort of a very sweet salt, called the sugar of milk. All these when blended have a great *smoothness* to the taste, and a relaxing quality to the skin. The next thing children covet is *fruit*, and of fruits those principally which are sweet; and every one knows that the sweetness of fruit is caused by a subtile oil, and such a salt as that mentioned in the last section. Afterwards custom, habit, the desire of novelty, and a thousand other causes, confound, adulterate, and change our palates, so that we can no longer reason with any satisfaction about them. Before we quit this article, we must observe, that as smooth things are, as such, agreeable to the taste, and are found of a relaxing quality; so on the other hand, things which are found by experience to be of a strengthening

quality, and fit to brace the fibres, are almost universally rough and pungent to the taste, and in many cases rough even to the touch. We often apply the quality of sweetness, metaphorically, to visual objects. For the better carrying on this remarkable analogy of the senses, we may here call sweetness the beautiful of the taste.

SECT. XXIII.

VARIATION, WHY BEAUTIFUL.

ANOTHER principal property of beautiful objects is, that the line of their parts is continually varying its direction; but it varies it by a very insensible deviation; it never varies it so quickly as to surprise, or by the sharpness of its angle to cause any twitching or convulsion of the optick nerve. Nothing long continued in the same manner, nothing very suddenly varied, can be beautiful; because both are opposite to that agreeable relaxation which is the characteristick effect of beauty. It is thus in all the senses. A motion in a right line is that manner of moving, next to a very gentle descent, in which we meet the least resistance; yet it is not that manner of moving, which, next to a descent, wearies us the least. Rest certainly tends to relax: yet there is a species of motion which relaxes more than rest; a gentle oscillatory motion, a rising and falling. Rocking

sets children to sleep better than absolute rest; there is indeed scarcely any thing at that age, which gives more pleasure than to be gently lifted up and down; the manner of playing which their nurses use with children, and the weighing and swinging used afterwards by themselves as a favourite amusement, evince this very sufficiently. Most people must have observed the sort of sense they have had on being swiftly drawn in an easy coach on a smooth turf, with gradual ascents and declivities. This will give a better idea of the beautiful, and point out its probable cause better than almost any thing else. On the contrary, when one is hurried over a rough, rocky, broken road, the pain felt by these sudden inequalities shews why similar sights, feelings, and sounds, are so contrary to beauty: and with regard to the feeling, it is exactly the same in its effect, or very nearly the same, whether, for instance, I move my hand along the surface of a body of a certain shape, or whether such a body is moved along my hand. But to bring this analogy of the senses home to the eye: if a body presented to that sense has such a waving surface, that the rays of light reflected from it are in a continual insensible deviation from the strongest to the weakest (which is always the case in a surface gradually unequal) it must be exactly similar in its effects on the eye and touch; upon the one of which it operates directly, on the other indirectly.

And

And this body will be beautiful if the lines which compose its surface are not continued, even so varied, in a manner that may weary or dissipate the attention. The variation itself must be continually varied.

SECT. XXIV.

CONCERNING SMALLNESS.

TO avoid a sameness which may arise from the too frequent repetition of the same reasonings, and of illustrations of the same nature, I will not enter very minutely into every particular that regards beauty, as it is founded on the disposition of its quantity, or its quantity itself. In speaking of the magnitude of bodies there is great uncertainty, because the ideas of great and small are terms almost entirely relative to the species of the objects, which are infinite. It is true, that having once fixed the species of any object, and the dimensions common in the individuals of that species, we may observe some that exceed, and some that fall short of, the ordinary standard: those which greatly exceed are, by that excess, provided the species itself be not very small, rather great and terrible than beautiful: but as in the animal world, and in a good measure in the vegetable world likewise, the qualities that constitute beauty may possibly be united to things of greater

dimensions; when they are so united, they constitute a species something different both from the sublime and beautiful, which I have before called *Fine:* but this kind, I imagine, has not such a power on the passions, either as vast bodies have which are endued with the correspondent qualities of the sublime; or as the qualities of beauty have when united in a small object. The affection produced by large bodies adorned with the spoils of beauty, is a tension continually relieved; which approaches to the nature of mediocrity. But if I were to say how I find myself affected upon such occasions, I should say, that the sublime suffers less by being united to some of the qualities of beauty, than beauty does by being joined to greatness of quantity, or any other properties of the sublime. There is something so over-ruling in whatever inspires us with awe, in all things which belong ever so remotely to terrour, that nothing else can stand in their presence. There lie the qualities of beauty either dead or unoperative; or at most exerted to mollify the rigour and sternness of the terrour, which is the natural concomitant of greatness. Besides the extraordinary great in every species, the opposite to this, the dwarfish and diminutive ought to be considered. Littleness, merely as such, has nothing contrary to the idea of beauty. The humming-bird, both in shape and colouring, yields to none of the winged species, of which it is the

least:

least; and perhaps his beauty is enhanced by his smallness. But there are animals, which, when they are extremely small, are rarely (if ever) beautiful. There is a dwarfish size of men and women, which is almost constantly so gross and massive in comparison of their height, that they present us with a very disagreeable image. But should a man be found not above two or three feet high, supposing such a person to have all the parts of his body of a delicacy suitable to such a size, and otherwise endued with the common qualities of other beautiful bodies, I am pretty well convinced that a person of such a stature might be considered as beautiful; might be the object of love; might give us very pleasing ideas on viewing him. The only thing which could possibly interpose to check our pleasure is, that such creatures, however formed, are unusual, and are often therefore considered as something monstrous. The large and gigantic, though very compatible with the sublime, is contrary to the beautiful. It is impossible to suppose a giant the object of love. When we let our imagination loose in romance, the ideas we naturally annex to that size are those of tyranny, cruelty, injustice, and every thing horrid and abominable. We paint the giant ravaging the country, plundering the innocent traveller, and afterwards gorged with his half-living flesh: such are Polyphemus, Cacus, and others, who make so great

great a figure in romances and heroick poems. The event we attend to with the greatest satisfaction is their defeat and death. I do not remember, in all that multitude of deaths with which the Iliad is filled, that the fall of any man, remarkable for his great stature and strength, touches us with pity; nor does it appear that the author, so well read in human nature, ever intended it should. It is Simoisius, in the soft bloom of youth, torn from his parents, who tremble for a courage so ill suited to his strength; it is another hurried by war from the new embraces of his bride, young and fair, and a novice to the field, who melts us by his untimely fate. Achilles, in spite of the many qualities of beauty which Homer has bestowed on his outward form, and the many great virtues with which he has adorned his mind, can never make us love him. It may be observed, that Homer has given the Trojans, whose fate he has designed to excite our compassion, infinitely more of the amiable, social virtues than he has distributed among his Greeks. With regard to the Trojans, the passion he chooses to raise is pity; pity is a passion founded on love; and these *lesser*, and if I may say domestick virtues, are certainly the most amiable. But he has made the Greeks far their superiours in the politick and military virtues. The councils of Priam are weak; the arms of Hector comparatively feeble; his courage far

below

below that of Achilles. Yet we love Priam more than Agamemnon, and Hector more than his conqueror Achilles. Admiration is the passion which Homer would excite in favour of the Greeks, and he has done it by bestowing on them the virtues which have but little to do with love. This short digression is perhaps not wholly beside our purpose, where our business is to shew, that objects of great dimensions are incompatible with beauty, the more incompatible as they are greater; whereas the small, if ever they fail of beauty, this failure is not to be attributed to their size.

SECT. XXV.

OF COLOUR.

WITH regard to colour, the disquisition is almost infinite: but I conceive the principles laid down in the beginning of this part are sufficient to account for the effects of them all, as well as for the agreeable effects of transparent bodies, whether fluid or solid. Suppose I look at a bottle of muddy liquor, of a blue or red colour; the blue or red rays cannot pass clearly to the eye, but are suddenly and unequally stopped by the intervention of little opaque bodies, which without preparation change the idea, and change it too into one disagreeable in its own nature, conformably to the principles laid down in sect. 24. But when the ray

ray passes without such opposition through the glass or liquor, when the glass or liquor is quite transparent, the light is sometimes softened in the passage, which makes it more agreeable even as light; and the liquor reflecting all the rays of its proper colour *evenly*, it has such an effect on the eye, as smooth opaque bodies have on the eye and touch. So that the pleasure here is compounded of the softness of the transmitted, and the evenness of the reflected light. This pleasure may be heightened by the common principles in other things, if the shape of the glass which holds the transparent liquor be so judiciously varied, as to present the colour gradually and interchangeably, weakened and strengthened with all the variety which judgment in affairs of this nature [illegible] with-gest. On a review of all that has been said of the effects, as well as the causes of both, it will appear, that the sublime and beautiful are built on principles very different, and that their affections are as different: the great has terrour for its basis; which, when it is modified, causes that emotion in the mind, which I have called astonishment; the beautiful is founded on mere positive pleasure, and excites in the soul that feeling, which is called love. Their causes have made the subject of this fourth part.

THE END OF THE FOURTH PART.

A PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE

ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS

OF THE

SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL.

PART V.

SECTION I.

OF WORDS.

NATURAL objects affect us, by the laws of that connexion which Providence has established between certain motions and configurations of bodies, and certain consequent feelings in our mind. Painting affects in the same manner, but with the superadded pleasure of imitation. Architecture affects by the laws of nature, and the law of reason; from which latter result the rules of proportion, which make a work to be praised or censured, in the whole or in some part, when the end for which it was designed is or is not properly

properly answered. But as to words; they seem to me to affect us in a manner very different from that in which we are affected by natural objects, or by painting or architecture; yet words have as considerable a share in exciting ideas of beauty and of the sublime as many of those, and sometimes a much greater than any of them; therefore an enquiry into the manner by which they excite such emotions is far from being unnecessary in a discourse of this kind.

SECT. II.

THE COMMON EFFECTS OF POETRY, NOT BY RAISING IDEAS OF THINGS.

THE common notion of the power of poetry and eloquence, as well as that of words in ordinary conversation, is, that they affect the mind by raising in it ideas of those things for which custom has appointed them to stand. To examine the truth of this notion, it may be requisite to observe, that words may be divided into three sorts. The first are such as represent many simple ideas *united by nature* to form some one determinate composition, as man, horse, tree, castle, &c. These I call *aggregate words*. The second are they that stand for one simple idea of such compositions, and no more; as red, blue, round, square, and the like. These I call *simple abstract* words. The

third, are those which are formed by an union, an *arbitrary* union of both the others, and of the various relations between them in greater or lesser degrees of complexity; as virtue, honour, persuasion, magistrate, and the like. These I call *compound abstract* words. Words, I am sensible, are capable of being classed into more curious distinctions; but these seem to be natural, and enough for our purpose; and they are disposed in that order in which they are commonly taught, and in which the mind gets the ideas they are substituted for. I shall begin with the third sort of words; compound abstracts, such as virtue, honour, persuasion, docility. Of these I am convinced, that whatever power they may have on the passions, they do not derive it from any representation raised in the mind of the things for which they stand. As compositions, they are not real essences, and hardly cause, I think, any real ideas. Nobody, I believe, immediately on hearing the sounds, virtue, liberty, or honour, conceives any precise notions of the particular modes of action and thinking, together with the mixt and simple ideas, and the several relations of them for which these words are substituted; neither has he any general idea, compounded of them; for if he had, then some of those particular ones, though indistinct perhaps, and confused, might come soon to be perceived. But this, I take it, is hardly ever the case. For,

put

put yourself upon analyzing one of these words, and you must reduce it from one set of general words to another, and then into the simple abstracts and aggregates, in a much longer series than may be at first imagined, before any real idea emerges to light, before you come to discover any thing like the first principles of such compositions; and when you have made such a discovery of the original ideas, the effect of the composition is utterly lost. A train of thinking of this sort is much too long to be pursued in the ordinary ways of conversation; nor is it at all necessary that it should. Such words are in reality but mere sounds; but they are sounds which being used on particular occasions, wherein we receive some good, or suffer some evil; or see others affected with good or evil; or which we hear applied to other interesting things or events; and being applied in such a variety of cases, that we know readily by habit to what things they belong, they produce in the mind, whenever they are afterwards mentioned, effects similar to those of their occasions. The sounds being often used without reference to any particular occasion, and carrying still their first impressions, they at last utterly lose their connexion with the particular occasions that gave rise to them; yet the sound, without any annexed notion, continues to operate as before.

SECT. III.

GENERAL WORDS BEFORE IDEAS.

MR. LOCKE has somewhere observed, with his usual sagacity, that most general words, those belonging to virtue and vice, good and evil, especially, are taught before the particular modes of action to which they belong are presented to the mind; and with them, the love of the one, and the abhorrence of the other; for the minds of children are so ductile, that a nurse, or any person about a child, by seeming pleased or displeased with any thing, or even any word, may give the disposition of the child a similar turn. When, afterwards, the several occurrences in life come to be applied to these words, and that which is pleasant often appears under the name of evil; and what is disagreeable to nature is called good and virtuous; a strange confusion of ideas and affections arises in the minds of many; and an appearance of no small contradiction between their notions and their actions. There are many who love virtue and who detest vice, and this not from hypocrisy or affectation, who notwithstanding very frequently act ill, and wickedly in particulars without the least remorse; because these particular occasions never came into view, when the passions on the side of virtue were so warmly affected by

 certain

certain words heated originally by the breath of others; and for this reason, it is hard to repeat certain sets of words, though owned by themselves unoperative, without being in some degree affected; especially if a warm and affecting tone of voice accompanies them, as suppose,

Wise, valiant, generous, good, and great.

These words, by having no application, ought to be unoperative; but when words commonly sacred to great occasions are used, we are affected by them even without the occasions. When words which have been generally so applied are put together without any rational view, or in such a manner that they do not rightly agree with each other, the style is called bombast. And it requires in several cases much good sense and experience to be guarded against the force of such language; for when propriety is neglected, a greater number of these affecting words may be taken into the service, and a greater variety may be indulged in combining them.

SECT. IV.

THE EFFECT OF WORDS.

IF words have all their possible extent of power, three effects arise in the mind of the hearer. The first

first is, the *sound;* the second, the *picture*, or representation of the thing signified by the sound; the third is, the *affection* of the soul produced by one or by both of the foregoing. *Compounded abstract* words, of which we have been speaking, (honour, justice, liberty, and the like) produce the first and the last of these effects, but not the second. *Simple abstracts*, are used to signify some one simple idea without much adverting to others which may chance to attend it, as blue, green, hot, cold, and the like; these are capable of affecting all three of the purposes of words; as the *aggregate* words, man, castle, horse, &c. are in a yet higher degree. But I am of opinion, that the most general effect, even of these words, does not arise from their forming pictures of the several things they would represent in the imagination; because, on a very diligent examination of my own mind, and getting others to consider theirs, I do not find that once in twenty times any such picture is formed, and, when it is, there is most commonly a particular effort of the imagination for that purpose. But the aggregate words operate, as I said of the compound-abstracts, not by presenting any image to the mind, but by having from use the same effect on being mentioned, that their original has when it is seen. Suppose we were to read a passage to this effect: "The river Danube rises in a moist and mountainous soil in

the heart of Germany, where winding to and fro, it waters several principalities, until, turning into Austria, and leaving the walls of Vienna, it passes into Hungary; there with a vast flood, augmented by the Saave and the Drave, it quits Christendom, and rolling through the barbarous countries which border on Tartary, it enters by many mouths in the Black sea." In this description many things are mentioned, as mountains, rivers, cities, the sea, &c. But let any body examine himself, and see whether he has had impressed on his imagination any pictures of a river, mountain, watery soil, Germany, &c. Indeed it is impossible, in the rapidity and quick succession of words in conversation, to have ideas both of the sound of the word, and of the thing represented: besides, some words, expressing real essences, are so mixed with others of a general and nominal import, that it is impracticable to jump from sense to thought, from particulars to generals, from things to words, in such a manner as to answer the purposes of life; nor is it necessary that we should.

SECT. V.

EXAMPLES THAT WORDS MAY AFFECT WITHOUT RAISING IMAGES.

I FIND it very hard to persuade several that their passions are affected by words from whence they

they have no ideas; and yet harder to convince them, that in the ordinary course of conversation we are sufficiently understood without raising any images of the things concerning which we speak. It seems to be an odd subject of dispute with any man, whether he has ideas in his mind or not. Of this, at first view, every man, in his own forum, ought to judge without appeal. But, strange as it may appear, we are often at a loss to know what ideas we have of things, or whether we have any ideas at all upon some subjects. It even requires a good deal of attention to be thoroughly satisfied on this head. Since I wrote these papers, I found two very striking instances of the possibility there is, that a man may hear words without having any idea of the things which they represent, and yet afterwards be capable of returning them to others, combined in a new way, and with great propriety, energy, and instruction. The first instance is that of Mr. Blacklock, a poet blind from his birth. Few men blessed with the most perfect sight can describe visual objects with more spirit and justness than this blind man; which cannot possibly be attributed to his having a clearer conception of the things he describes than is common to other persons. Mr. Spence, in an elegant preface which he has written to the works of this poet, reasons very ingeniously, and, I imagine, for the most part, very rightly, upon the cause of this extraordinary

phenomenon; but I cannot altogether agree with him, that some improprieties in language and thought, which occur in these poems, have arisen from the blind poet's imperfect conception of visual objects, since such improprieties, and much greater, may be found in writers even of a higher class than Mr. Blacklock, and who notwithstanding possessed the faculty of seeing in its full perfection. Here is a poet doubtless as much affected by his own descriptions, as any that reads them can be; and yet he is affected with this strong enthusiasm by things of which he neither has, nor can possibly have any idea further than that of a bare sound: and why may not those who read his works be affected in the same manner that he was; with as little of any real ideas of the things described? The second instance is of Mr. Saunderson, professor of mathematicks in the university of Cambridge. This learned man had acquired great knowledge in natural philosophy, in astronomy, and whatever sciences depend upon mathematical skill. What was the most extraordinary and the most to my purpose, he gave excellent lectures upon light and colours; and this man taught others the theory of those ideas which they had, and which he himself undoubtedly had not. But it is probable that the words red, blue, green, answered to him as well as the ideas of the colours themselves; for the ideas of greater or lesser degrees of refrangi-

bility being applied to these words, and the blind man being instructed in what other respects they were found to agree or to disagree, it was as easy for him to reason upon the words, as if he had been fully master of the ideas. Indeed it must be owned he could make no new discoveries in the way of experiment. He did nothing but what we do every day in common discourse. When I wrote this last sentence, and used the words *every day* and *common discourse*, I had no images in my mind of any succession of time; nor of men in conference with each other; nor do I imagine that the reader will have any such ideas on reading it. Neither when I spoke of red, or blue and green, as well as refrangibility, had I these several colours, or the rays of light passing into a different medium, and there diverted from their course, painted before me in the way of images. I know very well that the mind possesses a faculty of raising such images at pleasure; but then an act of the will is necessary to this; and in ordinary conversation or reading it is very rarely that any image at all is excited in the mind. If I say, "I shall go to Italy next summer," I am well understood. Yet I believe nobody has by this painted in his imagination the exact figure of the speaker passing by land or by water, or both; sometimes on horseback, sometimes in a carriage; with all the particulars of the journey. Still less has he any idea of Italy, the

country to which I proposed to go; or of the greenness of the fields, the ripening of the fruits, and the warmth of the air, with the change to this from a different season, which are the ideas for which the word *summer* is substituted: but least of all has he any image from the word *next;* for this word stands for the idea of many summers, with the exclusion of all but one: and surely the man who says *next summer*, has no images of such a succession, and such an exclusion. In short, it is not only of those ideas which are commonly called abstract, and of which no image at all can be formed, but even of particular, real beings, that we converse without having any idea of them excited in the imagination; as will certainly appear on a diligent examination of our own minds. Indeed, so little does poetry depend for its effect on the power of raising sensible images, that I am convinced it would lose a very considerable part of its energy, if this were the necessary result of all description. Because that union of affecting words, which is the most powerful of all poetical instruments, would frequently lose its force along with its propriety and consistency, if the sensible images were always excited. There is not perhaps in the whole Eneid a more grand and laboured passage than the description of Vulcan's cavern in Etna, and the works that are there carried on. Virgil dwells particularly on the formation of the thunder, which

which he describes unfinished under the hammers of the Cyclops. But what are the principles of this extraordinary composition?

Tres imbris torti radios, tres nubis aquosæ
Addiderant; rutili tres ignis, et alitis austri:
Fulgores nunc terrificos, sonitumque, metumque
Miscebant operi, flammisque sequacibus iras.

This seems to me admirably sublime; yet if we attend coolly to the kind of sensible image which a combination of ideas of this sort must form, the chimeras of madmen cannot appear more wild and absurd than such a picture. "*Three rays of twisted* "*showers, three of watery clouds, three of fire,* "*and three of the winged south wind; then mixed* "*they in the work terrifick lightnings, and sound* "*and fear, and anger, with pursuing flames.*" This strange composition is formed into a gross body; it is hammered by the Cyclops, it is in part polished, and partly continues rough. The truth is, if poetry gives us a noble assemblage of words corresponding to many noble ideas, which are connected by circumstances of time or place, or related to each other as cause and effect, or associated in any natural way, they may be moulded together in any form, and perfectly answer their end. The picturesque connection is not demanded; because no real picture is formed; nor is the effect of the description

description at all the less upon this account. What is said of Helen by Priam and the old men of his council, is generally thought to give us the highest possible idea of that fatal beauty.

> Οὐ νεμεσις Τρωας και ευκνημιδας Αχαιυς,
> Τοιῃ δ' αμφι γυναικι πολυν χρονον αλγεα πασχειν·
> Αινως δ' αθανατοισι θεῃς εις ωπα εοικεν.

> *They cry'd, No wonder such celestial charms*
> *For nine long years have set the world in arms;*
> *What winning graces! what majestick mien!*
> *She moves a goddess, and she looks a queen.*
>
> POPE.

Here is not one word said of the particulars of her beauty; nothing which can in the least help us to any precise idea of her person; but yet we are much more touched by this manner of mentioning her, than by those long and laboured descriptions of Helen, whether handed down by tradition, or formed by fancy, which are to be met with in some authors. I am sure it affects me much more than the minute description which Spenser has given of Belphebe; though I own that there are parts, in that description, as there are in all the descriptions of that excellent writer, extremely fine and poetical. The terrible picture which Lucretius has drawn of religion, in order to display the magnanimity of his philosophical hero in opposing

opposing her, is thought to be designed with great boldness and spirit:

Humana ante oculos fœdè cum vita jaceret,
In terris, oppressa gravi sub religione,
Quæ caput e cœli regionibus ostendebat
Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans;
Primus Graius homo mortales tollere contra
Est oculos ausus. - - -

What idea do you derive from so excellent a picture? none at all, most certainly: neither has the poet said a single word which might in the least serve to mark a single limb or feature of the phantom, which he intended to represent in all the horrours imagination can conceive. In reality, poetry and rhetorick do not exceed in exact description so well as painting does; their business is, to affect rather by sympathy than imitation; to display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker, or of others, than to present a clear idea of the things themselves. This is their most extensive province, and that in which they succeed the best.

SECT. VI.

POETRY NOT STRICTLY AN IMITATIVE ART.

HENCE we may observe that poetry, taken in its most general sense, cannot with strict propriety be called an art of imitation. It is indeed an imitation so far as it describes the manners and passions of men which their words can express; where *animi motus effert interprete lingua*. There it is strictly imitation; and all merely *dramatick* poetry is of this sort. But *descriptive* poetry operates chiefly by *substitution;* by the means of sounds, which by custom have the effect of realities. Nothing is an imitation further than as it resembles some other thing; and words undoubtedly have no sort of resemblance to the ideas for which they stand.

SECT. VII.

HOW WORDS INFLUENCE THE PASSIONS.

NOW, as words affect, not by any original power, but by representation, it might be supposed, that their influence over the passions should be but light; yet it is quite otherwise; for we find by experience, that eloquence and poetry are

as

as capable, nay indeed much more capable, of making deep and lively impressions than any other arts, and even than nature itself in very many cases. And this arises chiefly from these three causes. First, that we take an extraordinary part in the passions of others, and that we are easily affected and brought into sympathy by any tokens which are shewn of them; and there are no tokens which can express all the circumstances of most passions so fully as words; so that if a person speaks upon any subject, he can not only convey the subject to you, but likewise the manner in which he is himself affected by it. Certain it is, that the influence of most things on our passions is not so much from the things themselves, as from our opinions concerning them; and these again depend very much on the opinions of other men, conveyable for the most part by words only. Secondly, there are many things of a very affecting nature, which can seldom occur in the reality, but the words that represent them often do: and thus they have an opportunity of making a deep impression and taking root in the mind, whilst the idea of the reality was transient; and to some perhaps never really occurred in any shape, to whom it is notwithstanding very affecting, as war, death, famine, &c. Besides many ideas have never been at all presented to the senses of any men but by words, as God, angels, devils, heaven, and

and hell, all of which have however a great influence over the passions. Thirdly, by words we have it in our power to make such *combinations* as we cannot possibly do otherwise. By this power of combining we are able, by the addition of well-chosen circumstances, to give a new life and force to the simple object. In painting we may represent any fine figure we please; but we never can give it those enlivening touches which it may receive from words. To represent an angel in a picture, you can only draw a beautiful young man winged: but what painting can furnish out any thing so grand as the addition of one word, "the angel of the *Lord?*" It is true, I have here no clear idea; but these words affect the mind more than the sensible image did; which is all I contend for. A picture of Priam dragged to the altar's foot, and there murdered, if it were well executed, would undoubtedly be very moving; but there are very aggravating circumstances, which it could never represent:

Sanguine fœdantem quos ipse sacraverat *ignes.*

As a further instance, let us consider those lines of Milton, where he describes the travels of the fallen angels through their dismal habitation:

- - - *O'er*

- - - O'er many a dark and dreary vale
They pass'd, and many a region dolorous;
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp:
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of
A universe of death. - - - [*death,*

Here is displayed the force of union in

Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens, and shades;

which yet would lose the greatest part of their effect, if they were not the

Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens, and shades—
- - - of Death.

This idea or this affection caused by a word, which nothing but a word could annex to the others, raises a very great degree of the sublime; and this sublime is raised yet higher by what follows, a "*universe of Death.*" Here are again two ideas not presentable but by language; and an union of them great and amazing beyond conception; if they may properly be called ideas which present no distinct image to the mind:—but still it will be difficult to conceive how words can move the passions which belong to real objects, without representing these objects clearly. This is difficult to us, because we do not sufficiently distinguish, in our observations upon language, between a clear expression, and a strong expression. These are frequently

frequently confounded with each other, though they are in reality extremely different. The former regards the understanding; the latter belongs to the passions. The one describes a thing as it is; the latter describes it as it is felt. Now, as there is a moving tone of voice, an impassioned countenance, an agitated gesture, which affect independently of the things about which they are exerted, so there are words, and certain dispositions of words, which being peculiarly devoted to passionate subjects, and always used by those who are under the influence of any passion, touch and move us more than those which far more clearly and distinctly express the subject matter. We yield to sympathy what we refuse to description. The truth is, all verbal description, merely as naked description, though never so exact, conveys so poor and insufficient an idea of the thing described, that it could scarcely have the smallest effect, if the speaker did not call in to his aid those modes of speech that mark a strong and lively feeling in himself. Then, by the contagion of our passions, we catch a fire already kindled in another, which probably might never have been struck out by the object described. Words, by strongly conveying the passions, by those means which we have already mentioned, fully compensate for their weakness in other respects. It may be observed, that very polished languages, and such as are praised

praised for their superiour clearness and perspicuity, are generally deficient in strength. The French language has that perfection and that defect. Whereas the oriental tongues, and in general the languages of most unpolished people, have a great force and energy of expression; and this is but natural. Uncultivated people are but ordinary observers of things, and not critical in distinguishing them; but, for that reason, they admire more, and are more affected with what they see, and therefore express themselves in a warmer and more passionate manner. If the affection be well conveyed, it will work its effect without any clear idea; often without any idea at all of the thing which has originally given rise to it.

It might be expected from the fertility of the subject, that I should consider poetry, as it regards the sublime and beautiful, more at large; but it must be observed that in this light it has been often and well handled already. It was not my design to enter into the criticism of the sublime and beautiful in any art, but to attempt to lay down such principles as may tend to ascertain, to distinguish, and to form a sort of standard for them; which purposes I thought might be best effected by an enquiry into the properties of such things in nature, as raise love and astonishment in us; and by shewing in what manner they operated to produce these passions. Words were only so far to be

considered, as to shew upon what principle they were capable of being the representatives of these natural things, and by what powers they were able to affect us often as strongly as the things they represent, and sometimes much more strongly.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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